

# college art journal

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LIONNEL FEININGER, *Courtesy Buchholz Gallery, New York.*

Journal  
Sloan

## ON JOHN SLOAN\*

By Aaron Bohrod

IT WOULD be pure presumption to tell you how you ought to feel about John Sloan's painting. For one thing, his work needs no interpretation, no explanation—unless it be of a technical nature. It is a clear record of one artist's reaction to the visual experiences of his life. Sloan's painting lies in the tradition of Hogarth and Hogarth's later compatriots, the illustrator Leech and Cruikshank. Other people could, of course, claim an entirely different set of aesthetic ancestors.

You know these relationships, one artist with another, are rather interesting. Last week a Saturday afternoon critic said that Sloan was sometimes called the "Manhattan Constantin Guys." There is a certain justification for the title (though I've never heard it used by anyone else), because there is external similarity in the *approach* of the two artists. In the event I were called upon to discuss the matter, I tried to look up the pronunciation of the name of this likable French artist. But it wasn't to be found in the biographical section of the big Webster's dictionary. John Sloan's name *was* there, however. Perhaps the critic meant that Guys, is *now* sometimes referred to as the "Parisian John Sloan."

In the early phases of his work, John Sloan concerned himself with what we call genre: street scenes, restaurant life, paintings of saloons, ferry boats, roof tops, back yards and so on through a whole catalogue of commonplace subjects. In his later and present phase, his main concern is with that most complex item of Nature's architecture—the human body.

I first knew John Sloan when I went to New York to study painting at the Art Students League. That was in 1929. I had already spent a little less than two years at the school of the Art Institute of Chicago, and had done some work in the commercial art field. This, while it proved fairly remunerative, had not been exactly the use to which I thought I ought to put what I fondly hoped were "my talents."

My first view of John Sloan came when he quietly entered our classroom, looked about a while at the easels which held the canvases started the day before, planted himself in the middle of the studio floor and

\* From a lecture before the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago for the opening of a one-man show of Sloan's work in February, 1942.

talked. He spoke for an hour. He spoke, it seemed to me, of everything under the sun. He spoke on the textural significance of the skin of an onion. Over the course of a year his words were to be repeated again and again; and when applied to the particular, they were to make profound good sense. Finally, close to home, he talked of painting; conservative painting, modern painting, modernistic painting. He explained wherein the distinctions lay. Each student was wondering, I know *I* was, where *his* work would stand in the esteem of this famous artist, this great teacher of art. Would he put his finger on any of us as possessors of incipient genius?

His introductory speech finished, he moved over to the canvas nearest to hand. That canvas was mine. The art student—of my day at any rate—was pathetically eager for his teacher's words of praise. John Sloan, it has appeared, liked modern painting. Well, I felt I could turn out as good a piece of modern painting as any student of my age and weight. A scholarship in my second year at the Institute had given me a lot of confidence. I thought I was developing a "style." In my commercial job I had been considered a kind of pioneer, a daring exponent of the very latest and most revolutionary art ideas. With the class but one day old, I had already detected, I imagined, my fellow students looking at my hard-edged, tricky canvas with glances of envy. Sloan talked loudly. He wanted the whole room to hear. He had said that students can learn from each other's work; that what he had to say about one person's work might be applied with beneficial results by another. Looking at my canvas, his first words were, "I see that this person has had considerable experience in painting." My chest swelled; I was elated. But deflation set in quickly. I do not recall how I was able to remain standing when I heard him continue: "And now he will have to unlearn everything he knows and start from scratch." Into my dim consciousness then drifted phrases about a too smartly-educated hand; about a possible corrective lying in the use of the opposite untrained, unsophisticated hand—the painting might then come from the heart without suffering the obfuscating effects of a trickily trained wrist. "If you want to be a painter," Sloan had finished, "keep away from commercial art." I had never dreamed it would show.

The next day I tucked my commercial art samples under my arm and the day following that I was seated at the drawing table of a swanky art studio, the possessor of the best art job I had ever held. But on that morning I had no enthusiasm for commercial art. Was this, I asked, was *this* what I had come to New York for? I kept thinking of John Sloan. What if Sloan did *not* care for my stuff? I would go back and show that man. I



went back, but I don't believe I showed him much that year. Always there was something that came between me and the canvas on which I placed my studies. But toward the end of the year, Sloan admitted to liking a couple of my drawings, had approved mildly of a painting or two, and at last he stated (reluctantly it appeared to me) that I *might* be on the right track. I was far from being an outstanding student in his group. While I worked with him for just a year, by remote control I think I remained under his influence for quite some time afterward. His influence somehow engendered a spirit of self criticism which is a healthy attribute in a young artist.

Sloan was an inspiring teacher. Painting, he said, was drawing with oil color. *Drawing* was all important. "Draw," he said, "Draw everything you *see* or *imagine* or *dream* of, and draw in every conceivable way." And so we students drew. Wherever we went, we were armed with sketch books. At night, in our own rooms, we turned out the lights and drew strange things without being able to see our papers. We drew from memory. We drew with the left hand. We drew with both hands at once. We pretended we were Matisse and drew like him. Like Renoir, and drew like him. Like Picasso. Strangely, Sloan admired Picasso's painting. He said that in his work Picasso is a great teacher of art; that he slices away everything extraneous and shows the students only the very necessary bone and muscle structure of design. We tried to draw like Picasso; but always *consciously*, with an effort to fathom the artist's thought processes; never with the idea of acquiring style cheaply.

At the end of a pose we would often string our drawings along a line and Sloan would talk about the efforts. He pointed out where a student had successfully expressed the pose, and wherein another had failed. These post mortems were extremely valuable and stimulating. The method was a far cry from the whispered, cautious form of criticism in vogue in most other classes.

Sloan painted, he told us, in two separate stages. First he was concerned with expressing the underlying structure of the things he painted. The second stage was intended to give surface life to the inner forms, by a textural overlay imparting significance to those forms. That is where the skin of the onion comes in. The inner onion, expressing the special character of the object, the skin, its color and texture.

Sloan was never content merely to talk. Talk on art can easily become meaningless abstraction. Where he could, he demonstrated. And he was just enough of a showman to enjoy these demonstrations. He had for several years used the gaze method of painting. This was in accord with his two-

part system. A solid underpainting serving as a base; the transparent glaze overlay giving life to the forms beneath.

For his glaze demonstration he posed the model very carefully. While this went on he seemed to be drawing the figure mentally. Very carefully he washed his canvas with turpentine and with simple earth colors he sketched in his basic forms. For white he used the humble Dutch Boy white lead. The underpainting was finished in a couple of hours. It looked strangely unprepossessing. It was very pale. It barely delineated the forms he had worked on, though close inspection showed directive brush strokes which perfectly described the figure.

The painting was allowed to dry and the demonstration was resumed the following week. Now the glaze was to be applied. First Sloan scraped off the little blobs of paint—paint lice he called them—caused by the coarsely ground white lead. Then with a rich varnishy medium he diluted his colors and flowed on his glaze tones. The flesh tones glowed with the stuff of life. The beauty of the glaze is that the underpainting takes on a luminosity which cannot be gained by direct thick painting. Certain beautiful colors that are dangerous in direct painting can be used with impunity in the glaze method. The whole result had a richness and a character which was everyday achievement with the old masters, but is quite unique in our time. This particular canvas contained but a minimum of the linear cross hatch which you see on many of Sloan's figure paintings now.

When the painting was complete, I remember that Sloan signed it not once, but twice. The first time it had been too well lettered and he wiped out the signature with the remark that while he did not care whether people knew that he *once* had earned his living as a lettering man, he did not want to keep reminding them of the fact. Sloan hated facility and cleverness in its every aesthetic manifestation.

John Sloan gazed at his finished painting without false modesty. But he said, as he patted down his reverse pompadour, that it looked like it might be a work of Rubens—done when the artist was six years old. His ingenuous statement instilled in us a great and rewarding desire to learn as much as possible about the work of the great Flemish master. With just such an off-hand touch Sloan introduced us to many another master of the brush.

Sloan's classes had never suffered from the kind of mutual imitation current in the neighboring studios. Next door was a class of earnest young people presided over by a popular Von Schlegel. This man's work was of a soft diaphanous nature, sensitive enough in its way. But every one of his

students worked also in a soft, wispy manner, sensitive enough, but in the same way. A like gregarious disease held sway in another well attended class. Most of the students were just imitators of this artist; special technique. Even now the New York critics pride themselves on being able to spot these students at a glance. It really is no great feat. The sturdier of the students, of course, drifted away from the influence and have developed something of their own. The weaker have been crushed.

The value of Sloan's teaching has been that very early he has encouraged the student to make his own road through the jungle of art trends; the student has been taught to look to *Nature* and to paint with a creative building-up process; so that the "manner" of his painting comes as natural to him as his own handwriting.

A leader in art, Sloan is also a fighter in the cause of worthy art movements. Everybody knows his valiant work in the foundation of the Society of Independent Artists, when there was a crying need for the formation of such an organization. During the year I studied with him, the Art Students League was wracked with great agitation. Sloan as president of the League had been restless under the policy of inbreeding which developed in the school. Prize students were returning after a year or two to perpetuate as *teachers* the methods and ideas they had learned in the same institution. It was Sloan's thought that the school reach out and embrace new talents—that it would benefit immeasurably from the resulting fresh impulses. Specifically, he wanted the League to offer a teaching position to George Grosz, who, perhaps having had access to a good political barometer was making his way to our shores. This, the entrenched bureaucracy of student managers could not see its way to do. Grosz was rumored to be a red, a trouble maker. The fight raged long and loud. It was Sloan against the majority, an unequal struggle which went the way of all such fights. Sloan resigned his presidency and his position in the school. But in the end his ideas won out. Several years later Grosz was offered the position Sloan had tried to get for him. He proved to be one of the most able and popular instructors on the staff. Other new talents were incorporated until now the League stands once more as the best art institution of its kind in the country.

A little while back I touched on the cross hatch aspect of Sloan's painting. This has called down upon his head some pretty stiff abuse from the critics and some of his fellow artists.

First, it had been a matter of *amazement* that an artist who for his genre painting was so generally admired and respected, chose to leave all that behind and launch out, at about the age of sixty, into an entirely new

field. He had already reached the status of "grand old man of art." That Sloan was unwilling to rest on old laurels was considered admirable. But that he chose a kind of painting with which he was unfamiliar and which in some eyes brought about deplorable results, was deemed a pity. I am far from agreeing that the results Sloan attained in his figure painting are deplorable. I cannot help saying that I think the cross hatch he uses in an attempt to bring greater textural realization to his surface forms sometimes does defeat his purpose and instead obscures those forms. I think this is the result of a too insistent application of his dictum: form first, then surface. This happens in but very few instances and the bulk of his figure painting has the same sensitivity, the same penetrating observation, the same love of subject that existed in his earlier work.

The adverse reaction to his cross hatch technique Sloan has outridden as he has outlasted his critics in every other fight he has been in. In this connection I am reminded of his colleague, William Glackens, who also rode out a long storm of mild abuse; though he, I believe, did not so much deserve to win. Glackens' early work, such as the Art Institute's double figure piece, is painted in the manner of Manet. But for the greater part of his mature painting career, Glackens executed innumerable fine examples painted in the manner of Renoir. Time and time again critics pointed out this fact, but making no impression, they tired of saying it. Before his death a few years ago they no longer seemed to remember that he was *still* painting like a vegetarian Renoir.

And so John Sloan has gone *his* way; but with better reason for the going. Critics no longer call derisive attention to his cross hatch nudes. And a few museum directors are even beginning to show some of these later paintings in their exhibitions; though most of them still rely on the earlier works for Sloan representation.

I had not seen Sloan for eleven years when I met him again at the Biesels', who are also former Sloan students. Sloan had somehow known my painting but did not remember me as a student. Frances Strain Biesel had arranged for me to meet him when he passed through Chicago last fall. I reminded him that I had not been a very good student while in his class; but he was gracious enough to tell me of a little incident which took place before one of my paintings in a New York exhibition. He was telling his companion, Don Freeman, who had studied with Sloan at the same time I did, that in this painting were demonstrated some of the things he tried to get across in his teaching. Freeman had told him, "You should like that painting; the artist was one of your students."

Seeing Sloan again, after this long lapse of time, made me feel strange. He is over seventy now. He had just recovered from a severe illness. He was talking to Frances Strain and me of a section of his book "Gist of Art." The things he said were the same things he had said years ago. I think I may have found fault, now, rightly or wrongly, with one or two of his ideas. I concluded that valuable as was his philosophy of art, still more important was the indefinable quality of inspiration with which he was able to give direction to the talents of the young students.

Just a week or two after this, I saw him again in New York. It was at one of those strange restrictive exhibitions. This one was at the Whitney Museum and the work on display was by artists under forty. Hardly a gray headed artist could be seen at this opening. If their work were not being shown, there was no reason for the veteran artists to appear. But John Sloan and his perky little wife (Dolly Sloan, who died in 1944) were there. Still shaky from his illness, Sloan was eager to see the work of the comparative unknowns on display, glad to pass along a word of encouragement to a young artist just finding his painting legs.

A moment ago I mentioned John Sloan's book, "Gist of Art." It was in 1929 and 1930 that much of the material for this book was gathered. Helen Farr (now Mrs. Sloan), who collected the bulk of this material, painted in Sloan's class. But whenever Sloan was present she followed him about gathering the pearls of wisdom that dropped from his lips. And more often than not, they were real pearls. If you would like an insight into an artist's approach to life and the business of painting, read this book. I think you will enjoy it, and I think it may teach you to understand a bit better the art of the past and of the present.

And now a final thought. If I were a professional lecturer I would not think of saying this, but since I am only a professional painter I think of it in connection with every exhibition. The purchase of a work of his art is still the greatest appreciation you can give an artist. These are paintings done with sincerity, sympathy and true humility. There is nothing here of the chic. No fireworks and none of the titillating devices served up by some artists for the jaded appetites of some critics and gallery goers. If you have an empty spot on one of your walls, consider a John Sloan for that spot; or if you have a place tenanted by an unworthy occupant, eject it for a work of art by this great "custodian of American culture."

## DIEGO RIVERA AT THE ACADEMY OF SAN CARLOS

*By Jean Charlot*

TOWARDS the end of the nineteenth century, Mexico City was quite different from the cosmopolitan metropolis of today. Interesting sights, now disappeared, still surrounded the eighteenth century building that housed the Academy of Fine Arts of San Carlos of New Spain, known since Independence as the National Academy. Facing it, at the corner of the Cerrada de Santa Teresa and the street of Santa Ynez, was the open workshop where the Indian craftsman, Guadalupe Posada, carved on type-metal masterly engravings. Close by was the printing establishment of Don Antonio Vanegas Arroyo, who turned out one hand-manned screw-presses popular editions, strictly unlimited, of penny sheets, pious images, and street gazettes, reckoned today among the more authentic witnesses of their era.

Only two city blocks away from the Academy were still to be seen the last live vestiges of a time when Mexico-Tenochtitlan was the Venice of the Americas, its commerce gliding on the criss-cross web of its waterways. In the vicinity of Roldan Street the scene had scarcely changed from the one that Cortez sighted on arrival, and not at all since 1855 when Castro lithographed his busy plate, "The Roldan Bridge," for the album that described Mexico City and its suburbs.<sup>1</sup> On feast days, and especially on that of Santa Anita, the usual traffic loads of vegetables gave way to boat-loads of flowers brought from the countryside on primitive canoes by Indian paddlers in white, and girls in native embroidered blouses and full skirts of hand woven material. Less gracefully, the city sewage flowed into the canal, and neighboring wine-shops catered to the noisy busy crowds gathered at the landings.

Diego Rivera entered the Academy of San Carlos in 1898, being then twelve years of age. What went on back of the school building interested him at least as much as the stuffy classrooms where, for the first two years, he drew exclusively from prints, mostly charts of noses, ears, feet and eyes. His fellow students, among them Ignacio A. Rosas, remember how Diego came to school in short pants and shocking-pink socks, his pockets full of

<sup>1</sup> "Mexico y sus Alrededores," V. Debray, editor and publisher, Mexico, 1855.



fearful boyish things, bent pins, old strings and live bait that wiggled freely, minus the luxury of a container. Between classes, and presumably more often, the fat boy would sneak out along the back streets with lowbrow names—de la Alhondiga, de la Leña, de la Pulqueria, de Machincuepa—and, sitting by the canal, feet dangling close to the stinking waters, fish. At that, he must have found time to draw too: at the end of the first year his teacher, Andrés Rios, consulting with other members of the faculty, pronounced Rivera's work "Very good, unanimously;" and the second year this estimate was topped with a "Perfectly good, unanimously."<sup>2</sup> Dating of one of these two first years is the most childish among his preserved student drawings, a medley of putti and garlands imbued with a naïve rococo flavor.<sup>3</sup>

From the copy of prints after plaster casts, Rivera graduated in 1900 to the rendering from actual plaster casts. Two of these drawings are still filed in the school archives. One is a bust of Homer, and the other a Venus of Milo, of fair semblance though standing on her head; such unconventional postures were meant to sharpen in the students an appreciation of proportions as such.

Diego's new teacher was the painter and etcher, Julio Ruelas, who has left a name and a work of enduring interest.<sup>4</sup> Dean of the faculty was Don Santiago Rebull, a born Ingrist and a disciple of Pelegrin Clavé, Catalan director of the Mexican Academy for twenty years of the mid-century.<sup>5</sup> Since youth, Rebull shared Clavé's admiration for the theories of the Nazarenes, German pre-Raphaelite expatriates who had lived and painted in Italy. As a result, the leaders of this forgotten art sect, Overbeck and Cornelius, were still worshipped in 1900 at the Mexican school. Like the Biblical personages that they painted, the Mexican Nazarenes grew apostolic beards, disdained fashion, and adopted an austerity of dress and deportment that the tiny salaries on which they raised large Catholic broods would alone have justified. Perhaps they overshot the mark in their disdain of niceties: it is told of Felix Parra that, while correcting a student, he would

<sup>2</sup> Archives of the school. 1905-10, "Alumnos certificados." It contains a detailed account of Rivera's activities as a student, up to December 2, 1905.

<sup>3</sup> Collection of student drawings, in the care of the school librarian, Señor Lino Picasen. 1763-1913.

<sup>4</sup> Born Zacatecas, 1870. Died Paris 1907. Studied at the University of Karlsruhe, Baden, Germany. A pre-surrealist, working under the influence of Boecklin and of Félicien Rops.

<sup>5</sup> Rebull: Born at sea, from Spanish parents, 1829. Died Mexico D.F., 1902. Rome prize, 1852. Professor at the Academy since 1859. Was Director of the school under Emperor Maximilian. Clavé: Born Barcelona, 1810. Died there, 1880. In Mexico, he was official dictator in matters esthetic from 1847 to 1868.



reproach him mildly, "Move that line just a trifle to the left. Look here, no wider than the black under my nail."<sup>6</sup>

In 1901, Rivera added to his curriculum perspective and anatomy, and the drawing of landscapes, presumably after French lithographs. The next year, he began to draw from life, and to paint, but only from other paintings. In 1903, he "took" art history and painted from nature, both life and landscape. The latter class was under José Maria Velasco, who rates high in the history of Mexican art.<sup>7</sup> Velasco had been a student of Eugenio Landesio, an imported Italian teacher who rendered landscapes in a tight, sharp and enamelled manner, to which the genius of his gifted student added the silvery glow and spatial immensity of the Mexican plateau sights. It is through Velasco's teachings that Rivera was spared the stage of impressionism that he would have contacted at that date in Europe; Velasco's severely logical approach to optical problems prepared instead the young man for the further rationalizations of cubism. Rivera tells how the Mexican master introduced him to the classical concept of color, when correcting one of his juvenile essays, "Boy, you cannot go on painting in that way. In the foreground you put side by side yellow spots for sunlight and blue spots for shadows; but yellow comes forwards and blue recedes, so that you destroy the very plane that you pretend to describe."

The final examination in landscape painting for that year took place in November. The locale was the park of Chapultepec, famous since pre-Hispanic days for its *ahuehuetes*, gnarled ancient trees with a foliage subtle as mimosa's, that Velasco himself so loved to paint. "Having selected a site adequate for studies from nature, the jurors assigned a place each to the students registered for the test, and left. The students worked from nine A.M. to noon for six successive days, under the supervision of one of the school prefects." The coveted medal went to a girl, Maria Enriqueta Gochicoa, with Rivera receiving a mention.<sup>8</sup>

That same year, 1903, a newcomer to the school faculty was Antonio Fabres, a Catalan like Clavé. His masterpiece, a Bacchanal, combining the subject matter of Velasquez and the style of Meissonier, had just been bought by the Mexican government for 12,000 pesos.<sup>9</sup> Fabres also was the

<sup>6</sup> Parra: born Morelia, Michoacan, 1845. Died Mexico, D.F., 1918. Professor at the school since 1882. His best known picture: "Father Las Casas, defender of the Indians."

<sup>7</sup> Born Temazcaltzingo, Mexico, 1840. Died Villa de Guadalupe, D.F., 1912. Professor at the Academy since 1868.

<sup>8</sup> Archives, "Libro de Actas," p. 165.

<sup>9</sup> Papers relating to the transactions in Archives, 1905-2.

inventor and exponent of a teaching method that he claimed to be no less than a shortcut to genius. Whatever the more seasoned members of the faculty may have thought of him, they kept it wisely to themselves because Fabres had just been named sub-director of the school in a personal move of the Dictator and President of the Mexican Republic, Don Porfirio Diaz, who befriended him. The director, Don Antonio Rivas Mercado, was a Mexican architect of some renown and of a lymphatic disposition.<sup>10</sup> At the beginning, at least, he made an honest effort to work in harmony with Fabres, but the task was to prove impossible. The school archives bulge with the irate haughty letters that the sub-director wrote to the director to coerce and frighten and bully him into submission.

Fabres failed totally to understand how respect was due to the older teachers who were not only his betters as artists, but meant an irreplaceable link in the national tradition. In one of his written complaints, he referred to Parra, who continued, as he had done since 1882, to give to his students for models prints after the Masters, "You know very well that, in my system of drawing, approved by the government so that today IT IS THE LAW, there is no such thing as drawing from prints. If we keep it for the first years it is only with the understanding that, eventually, we shall be able to replace prints with photographs."<sup>11</sup>

Out of his own mouth, this ambitious man emerges as something of a charlatan, for example in this self-appreciation, "Sr. Fabres is the discoverer of the fact that, to insure quick progress in drawing and painting from the model, there is nothing equal to a certain sort of photographs that only he knows how to achieve. . . . Now that his claim has been approved, the Mexican school will lead all other schools in the whole world in this matter."<sup>12</sup>

It became the responsibility of the school photographer, Caboni, to put into practice the mysterious method. The explanations furnished by Fabres lacked technical explicitness, if we judge by the following note, "Fabres to Caboni: Please be present at the life class and at that of costume, there to take, by the use of magnesium and all other customary accessories, the photographs that I will tell you to take."<sup>13</sup>

The faith that Fabres put in the art of Meissonier, deemed indeed by most of his contemporaries to be the leading master of the age, went further

<sup>10</sup> Mercado's best known work is the Column of Independence, in the Paseo de la Reforma, where the ashes of national heroes are enshrined.

<sup>11</sup> Archives, 1903. "Asunto Fabres," March 29.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1904-7, "Comunicaciones del Sr. Fabres."

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, April 29, 1904.

than to favor photographic exactitude over the great styles of the past. Meissonier was also famous for a zeal for accurate detail, that, for example, made him borrow Napoléon's greatcoat from the Musée des Invalides, to give added historical validity to his tiny picture of the retreat from Russia. Fabres collected whatever paraphernalia was judged an indispensable adjunct of artistic success: old uniforms of grenadiers and musketeers, armors, spurs and leather boots, helmets, rapiers and daggers, rags of damask, velvet and goldcloth. These treasures, that he brought with him from Spain, became a never ending source of squabbles with harassed Rivas Mercado. Wrote Fabres, who spoke of himself decorously in the third person, but with an occasional lapse: "Señor Fabres reports the following to the Directorship of the school: the individual who models for the class of costume has put the one I gave him to wear in such a condition of filth that he [Fabres] asks how to proceed in this disagreeable occurrence, as he is loath to see this clothing depreciated from its artistic state. To give it to be washed would impair this quality, and its owner is equally unwilling to let it out of sight. In another case, a helmet was injured as well as a cuirasse, and other clothing was unstitched and ripped."<sup>14</sup>

The true ambition of Fabres, that was far from secret, was to replace Mercado as director. His impatience in this respect led to an incident that afforded Rivera the opportunity for a first recorded act of rebellion. July 29, 1903, Fabres gave a paper to his students to sign, implying that it was only a routine class checkup. As the paper was folded in such a way that its contents were not revealed, the signers had to take his word for it. A majority obeyed, but two of the adolescents refused to comply, saying that they would gladly give their names but not their signatures. The following day, Lino Lebrija, head janitor of the school, reported to the director, "Last night, students Rivera and Gutierrez were expelled from the costume class of Señor Fabres, because they refused to put down their names and qualifications."

Queried by Mercado, Fabres gave a heated version of the incident, "These two gentlemen, Rivera and Gutierrez, not only do they disobey in everything, but I know from what other students have reported, that they also attempt to recruit other boys, equally non-conforming, and loudly proclaim my actions and advice to be no better than nonsense and madness; . . . Despite my indignation, I did no more than to point out to them the exit door.

"If I may state my true feelings, it is that both may never again be seen

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* n.d.

in my classes. As they themselves have put it, of what possible use could it be to themselves or to myself that they be present only as active impediments?"<sup>15</sup>

August 1st, both students volunteered their own version, "Respectfully do we ask: How long is this punishment to last? . . . Are we at fault for refusing to sign a paper that was handed to us closed or folded, without disclosing its contents. . . . All that was said is that our names were needed, and we are at a loss to understand why our signatures were also asked for.

"Furthermore we suspected that this was another document, meant, it was rumored, for the President of the Republic, disregarding orders issued by the Director."

A week later, Mercado received a surprise communication from the Ministry of Education that proved the shrewdness of these youthful suspicions: "The attached petition was sent to the President of the Republic, and was signed by sixty-four students of the school. . . . We answered the petitioners in the sense that they should obey the authorities as well as the rules of their school."

The enclosed document read, "Sir, . . . it is thanks to your generous initiative that we possess a great teacher. After surmounting initial jealousies, he won us by his vast learning, his fruitful lessons and the rectitude of his conduct. . . . Alas, Mr. President, we feel impelled to state that the Director does not share our views, perhaps because, being an architect, he is somewhat removed from our interests.

"Could it be possible that architecture be separated from painting, sculpture and engraving? Thus securing for Don Antonio Fabres the needed independence to fulfill the mission that brought him to Mexico. . . ."<sup>16</sup>

Enlightened, Director Mercado reinstated Rivera and Gutierrez. It must be said for Fabres that he held no resentment: in the final tests for his class, that were held in November, the medal went to Natcho Rosas, but Rivera received a mention.

The next year, 1904, the breach widened still further between director and sub-director. In a huff, Fabres took his famed wardrobe out of the school building. Mercado complained to his superior, the Secretary of Education, Don Justo Sierra, "Since February 6, the students are drawing from the model just as he happens to be; that is in the clothes of the lower classes to which he belongs."

Whatever later generations of artists may think, who prefer to paint

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1903-41, "Expulsion de dos alumnos," for both documents.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 1903-33, for both documents.

the Indian in his white *calzoncillos*, or, even better, in overalls, this was dismal news indeed at the turn of the century, and Fabres was begged to reconsider. Still referring to himself in the third person, he refused to comply in no uncertain terms: "Señor Antonio Fabres, as owner, sole owner, of the costumes . . . feels moved to answer, I repeat, AS THEIR OWNER, that he is resolved not to lend them any more."

April 19th, the students, reduced to the plight of painting Mexicans as they are, humbly approached the Director, "Is there not a way of helping us to follow the opportunity of studying the costume? Such classes, besides being instructive, were also most entertaining, as much because of the knowledge gained of the diverse styles of clothing according to periods, as for the wealth of color and the artistic interest that it added to the model."<sup>17</sup> Having made his peace with Fabres, Rivera appears among the signers.

That year, 1904, Rivera got the coveted medal. The catalogue of the class show, that was held at the school, gives his first published biography: "Diego Rivera. Age: 18. Entered the school in 1898 and, after four years, was admitted to life-class."

In the next contest, held January 13, 1905, Rivera was again adjudged a medal, and this repeated success brought official repercussions:

"Office of the Ministry of Justice and Public Education.

"The President of the Republic graciously allows to student Diego Rivera a pension of 20.00 pesos monthly, payable at the School of Fine Arts and starting the first of the current month . . . as a reward for the medal obtained by the aforementioned student in the contest of painting from the costumed model. Mexico, January 17, 1905."

A student thus favored by the government was closely watched for progress. Every semester, the Director gave a personal report, and a corresponding printed form, such as the following, was filled in, "The President of the Republic, considering that the student *Diego Rivera* has been of good conduct and of sustained application . . . graciously renews his order of January 17, 1905, to pay to *the aforementioned student* the sum total of pesos 120.00 in monthly sums of pesos 20.00, so as to further the studies of *the aforementioned student*. July 1. Signed Ezequiel A. Chavez, Sub-Secretary of Education."

Rivera's pension was short-lived. The last document in the files of the school that concerns it, also gives the reason; it is a curt reply by the

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1904-7.



sub-Secretary of Education to the next semestrial Director's report on progress and conduct, "From the contents of your communication of the 8th of the current month, notice is taken of the fact that the pensioned student Diego Rivera entered the contests of life-drawing and coloring without obtaining any positive results. Mexico, January 12, 1906. E. A. Chavez."<sup>18</sup>

Soon after, Fabres lost favor with official circles. His epitaph as a teacher was written by Rivas Mercado, in a letter to the Secretary of Education, Justo Sierra, "It is by now public knowledge that photographic cameras are used in his classes, but Señor Fabres and his group may not any more have this supreme recourse to dazzle laymen and to waylay their own selves.

"His incompetence as a teacher should be easy to demonstrate, once he is despoiled of his only weapon in the competition of lawful teaching. I refer of course to the *camara lucida*, with whose powerful help he surprised the good faith of men unversed in matters of art."<sup>19</sup>

That same year, 1906, an exhibition was held at the Academy of the work of twelve artists pensioned to go to Europe, or who sent their contributions from there. To recoup his loss of a federal pension, Rivera had just received another one, this time from the Governor of the State of Vera Cruz, General Teodoro Dehesa, and was also making ready to go abroad. As a result, Rivera was also included in the group show. His display was substantial enough to constitute a first one-man show, and has been referred to as such by his biographers. The paintings, listed in the printed catalogue of the show, were all Mexican landscapes, brushed under the star of Velasco: "Vera-Cruz;" "Foggy Day, Xalapa;" "Queretaro;" "San Angel;" "Mixcoac;" etc. . . . Rivera's earliest style of landscape painting can be gathered from the small picture of the volcanoes that he still owns, where the pigment is applied with circular rhythmical strokes of a sensuousness that was not to outlast his European experience.

Gerardo Murillo, better known under the name of Dr. Atl, was busy in 1906 at an inventory of the ancient pictures piled in the storerooms of the school.<sup>20</sup> It was Atl who, acting as a friendly salesman, sold enough of Rivera's landscapes to buy him his passage to Europe, that the meager State pension could hardly provide. It was also Atl who wrote a personal letter of introduction to a painter friend, Eduardo Chicharro, who became Rivera's teacher in Spain.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 1906-8, "Pensiones," for both documents. The first one is a printed form. The italicized words are added by hand.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 1906-34.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1908-23.

## A PLAN FOR THE INDEX OF AMERICAN DESIGN

By Samuel M. Green

AT THE College Art Association meeting at New York in 1947, the remarks by Erwin O. Christensen, curator of the Index of American Design at the National Gallery, brought home to many members of the Association for the first time the importance and breadth of this collection. The Index at that time had been made available to the public only recently, though parts of it had been on view at the Metropolitan Museum during a few previous years. Since then, enough time has elapsed for its significance to be more generally appreciated.

The Index of American Design is a collection of some 22,000 water-color renderings and photographs of various arts and crafts in the field of Design in the United States from before 1700 until about 1900.<sup>1</sup> The collection includes the usual categories of furniture, textiles, ceramics, glass and metal work, but also those of hardware, jewelry, lighting devices, tools, utensils, vehicles and toys. Two of the principal categories are crafts of Religious Communities and Regional Groups (such as the Shakers and the Pennsylvania Germans), and wood carvings (including figureheads, circus and carousel animals, and cigar store Indians, as well as architectural ornament, animal, bird and other figures). Since the Index was opened to the public in 1946 there has been a constantly increasing use of the collection by individuals with specialized interests, and an expanding sale and loan of photographs, as well as the circulation of exhibitions made up from actual Index renderings. Last year, for instance, there were twenty-eight exhibitions with fifty bookings which were sent to twenty-five states. But perhaps the widest publicity achieved by the Index has been in the publication of three books by Mr. Christensen during the past two years, *Arts and Crafts: a Bibliography for Craftsmen* (Washington National Gallery of Art; 1949), a most useful compendium, and *Popular Art in the United States* (Penguin Books, Ltd.; 1949), an attractive, well-illustrated and moderately priced volume which will acquaint a larger public on both sides of the Atlantic with the importance of the collection and the wealth of the kind of material the Index has just begun to tap. An impressive and complete volume under the title,

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Christensen for this and the following information.



"The Index of American Design" has just been published last month by Macmillan. Thus the Index as part of the National Gallery is an important and useful archive of the popular arts of the United States, which functions in a way to arouse interest in traditional design not only among designers but also among students of American life and culture.

But there is one aspect of the Index which should be brought to the attention of the readers of the *Journal*: since the cessation of the Index as a W.P.A. project, the collection, contrary to the intention of its founders, is no longer a growing body of material but a static one. Yet the principles underlying the creation of the Index are as valid now as at the time of its founding and its potential usefulness not any less. The following quotation from the foreword of the *Index of American Design Manual* (W.P.A. Technical Series Art Circular No. 3, Nov. 3, 1938) sums up the purposes of the Index in this way:

"The aim of the Index is to compile material for a nation-wide pictorial survey of design in the American decorative, useful and folk arts from their inception to about 1890.

"It seeks especially:—

1. To record material of historical significance which has not heretofore been studied and which, for one reason or another, stands in danger of being lost.
2. To gather a body of traditional material which may form the basis of an organic development of American design.
3. To make usable source records of this material accessible to artists, designers, manufacturers, museums, libraries, and art schools.

"The Index of American Design is preparing a series of accurate illustrations depicting the rise and development of American Design. European nations have long realized the importance of gathering such material. They have prepared collections of plates in color and have published richly illustrated books on their decorative, applied and folk arts, thus placing the full picture of the native arts of design at the disposal of their scholars, creative workers and manufacturers. Familiarity with the roots of their design tradition has given the work of European designers a rich individuality. This quality has attracted American manufacturers to the European design market with a consequent neglect of native American talent.

"There is no single comprehensive collection of pictorial data on American design comparable with the great European classics in the field. With compilation of the Index of American Design, typical examples of an indigenous American character will be made available for study. It is hoped that this material will stimulate the artist, designer, and manufacturer of articles of everyday use to build upon American tradition and that it will offer an opportunity for the student, teacher, research worker, and general public to become familiar with this important phase of our culture pattern."

Though there was considerable interest in the American popular arts before the Index came into existence, after its creation the whole field was stimulated by it, thus greatly enriching the total cultural picture of the United States. This fact is reflected at present not only in the greater ap-

preciation of the intrinsic formal elements in folk art (often at the expense of work by professionally trained artists), but also in the realization that the objects are important in the social history of the nation "as touchstones to the temper of a period," in the words of Constance Rourke.

The importance of the Index is such that its revival as a dynamic collection should be the responsibility of private individuals and not contingent on some future economic maladjustment requiring "made" work for the relief of unemployment. The purpose of this article is to show how, in one region, the State of Maine, a successful beginning has been made to carry on the work of the Index as it was originally conceived—a beginning which may serve to stimulate emulation elsewhere.

During the time the Index functioned as a W.P.A. project in Maine, only a small part of the wealth of material appropriate for the Index was recorded by renderings and photographs. Sixty-eight plates in all were executed, twenty-nine carvings (mostly figureheads and other items from sailing vessels), twelve examples of Shaker furniture from Sabbathday Lake, thirteen textiles (including the noteworthy bed hanging of 1754 from the old York Gaol) and fourteen miscellaneous objects, mostly wall stencils and old dolls. The photographic record consisted principally of the work of Edbury Hatch, the last of the figurehead carvers in the towns of Newcastle and Damariscotta. Though this collection is extremely valuable it is only a beginning, and as such can be taken as typical of the situation in other states—a fact which serves to reemphasize the need for continued collecting and recording. For instance, the products of whole industries which would be of considerable interest to those outside of Maine, such as the Stevans Plains tinware, has gone unrecorded. I have seen figureheads and other carvings in deserted corners, lofts, and barns throughout the state, all of which will inevitably disappear without a trace unless recorded, just as hundreds of their kind have disappeared before now.

Recently through the initiative and enthusiasm of a Maine artist and collector, Miss Mildred Burrage of Wiscasset, a group of people in the state have taken upon themselves the task of reviving the Index as a living, dynamic organization. Miss Burrage states the purposes of the Index of Maine Design to be those of the project when it was functioning under the W.P.A., adding, in a circularized mimeographed statement, that it is "a collection of recorded designs and actual objects intended to be used freely by all craftsmen and designers in the state." The only point in which there is a difference between the Maine and the National Index is in the fact that the former includes actual objects. Yet the collecting of objects either for

their own sakes or in preparation for recording in renderings is not incompatible with the purposes of the Index, broadly conceived. Indeed, much of the material would otherwise be lost, and if saved, would be placed in antiquarian and historical societies too widely separated for convenient study by designers and scholars.

The collection is at present housed in Wiscasset and consists of a fascinating group of objects ranging from the usual textiles, samplers, pottery and woodcarving to more specialized objects such as a rendering of the beautifully designed numbers of the pews from the church at Head Tide, and an iron dove of the type made at the Portland Stove Foundry in the workers' spare time. There are crocks from Alfred, glass from South Berwick and Dresden Mills, wall papers from Hallowell and Kennebunkport (some reproduced by Nancy McClelland); an indigo coverlet with a large Tudor rose, and a remarkable hand blocked cotton said to have been made in one of the earliest textile mills in the country, the York Mills at Saco. Miss Burrage has circulated a petition to craftsmen and others interested throughout the state to look for similar objects, either to be collected, or recorded, as in the case of wall paper, wall stencils, or hooked rugs. There are sub-committees in charge of painted tin, furniture designs and stencil patterns, and of hooked rugs.

The collection was first shown at the new Farnsworth Gallery at Rockland early last year on the occasion of the formation of the Maine Index, and was especially stimulating because juxtaposed with objects of contemporary design inspired by the older patterns. Already a considerable change can be seen in the work of many of the local craftsmen, made aware, through the Index, of objects of good design often for the first time. In fact a most encouraging reaction against the stereotyped patterns of the usual gift shop can be seen; organic design and sound craftsmanship are replacing the balsam cushions and the elaborate manipulation of pine cones and sea shells. Even if the recording of objects of popular design for their intrinsic beauty and cultural significance is not justification enough for the continuation of the Index, its salutary influence on contemporary art should recommend it.

Though the problems of collecting and making the collection available have been solved by the Maine Index, the solution of the far more important problem of rendering the objects has not yet been achieved. Local people of artistic talent, a few in fact trained in the Index when it was a state W.P.A. project, would be available, but their salaries would have to be paid. Of course it is conceivable that a few such persons in Maine or elsewhere would execute plates as part of a cooperative effort in whose purpose they were interested. Attempts in this direction have been made by the Maine Index

but without success as yet. A potentially more successful means of achieving the rendering of Index plates would be through College Art Departments, where the accurate draughtsmanship and color observation involved in the technique could be a valuable part in courses in practical or creative art. At the same time, discovery of interesting objects and research into their authorship could be a legitimate part of an Art History course.

This local manifestation, the Maine Index, functioning entirely through the enthusiasm and effort of private persons could well serve as a pattern for emulation in other regions. Until such time as the importance of the project is sufficiently realized to enable it to be supported in a nationwide way through government or other agencies, this is the only way in which the project can continue as a growing, living organization. Certainly private individuals, museums, historical societies and above all college Art Departments could arrange some method of cooperation in setting up the machinery for the discovery, census taking, collection and rendering of material suitable for the Index. If at first the collecting and rendering were not possible, at least the exploration of the field for future work would be a valuable first step. At the same time, a record of this exploration would be useful as a guide for scholars in the field of regional art and cultural history.

I single out college Art Departments for particular mention because they are usually equipped with facilities in both Art History and practical art, useful respectively for collecting objects and for rendering plates, and because as part of a larger intellectual community, there would be available cooperation by other departments such as that of History, and by the college library for storing and cataloguing. Furthermore, sometimes a college is the institution among all other cultural organizations which is most closely bound to a region, as in the case of many State Colleges and Universities.

A revival of the Index as a dynamic project functioning loosely in individual states but with a common purpose, and under the general aegis of the Index in Washington is quite feasible, as the local experiment in Maine has demonstrated. The machinery is set up: there is a central agency and depository in the National Gallery in competent hands; there are the tried methods of research as outlined in the W.P.A. Index manuals, and most important, the very careful and full directions for rendering the objects which are chosen to be recorded. This technique (worked out through several years of trial and error) is a marvel of accurate observation and depiction as can be testified to by anyone who has seen the index plates. Finally, there are many former Index workers throughout the country in whose minds the memories of research and recording techniques are still fresh, some of whom should be happy to take part in the inception of a revived project.

# A PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY OF ARTISTIC CREATION

By Julius Portnoy

ALTHOUGH the projective schools of psychology have contributed much to the study of the artist and his work, we still have come little closer, despite their efforts, to obtaining an explanation of artistic creation that is any more satisfying than the vague Socratic dictum of "poetic madness." With the advent of the psychoanalytic school, at the turn of the century, the artist seemed about to give up his secrets to an inductive analysis of human behavior; but so uncritically did the orthodox analyst accept the theory of sublimation, that in the end we were left with the artist's genealogy instead of gaining what originally promised to be a richer interpretation of his creative method. The experimentally minded psychologist, for his part, still views the artist's inspired moments with misgiving and disdainfully passes it off as an unsuitable project for the laboratory because of its elusive nature. Were we to study the diary notes, letters and biographies of the artists for clues to the creative process, we would find that their degree of subjectivity makes much of what they said open to question. Perhaps, if we were to synthesize the views which the philosophers, the psychologists and the artists have expressed on the creative process, we might yet arrive at a theory of art creation that would help to unravel the enigma of why the artist creates.

Gertrude Stein in her book on *Picasso* describes the creative artist as one not in advance of his generation but as the first of his contemporaries to be conscious of what is happening to his generation. If we follow through on this line of reasoning we would have to forego two traditional views of the artistic personality which have become hallowed with time; one, that the artist is divinely inspired; and two, that he is by nature a prophet of the future.

The tenor of Gertrude Stein's writings on the creative phenomenon realistically depicts the artist as an individual who is acutely aware of what is happening to his generation because he is a highly sensitive being. This sensitivity, in turn, causes him to react against the social inequities, the moral and religious repressions of his cultural order, and to rebel against the *status quo*. The artist cannot accept the world he lives in for what it is since he views it in terms of what it ought to be. He does not teach men to live with



the practical world, but he offers them an escape from it. It is precisely this aspect of artistic escapism that makes the Soviets and Plato of one mind in viewing the artistic personality with suspicion since they have a common philosophy that it is not the function of the artist to offer men an escape from the world of reality, but to teach them to live with what they have.

Gertrude Stein in her own life as a creative artist, did not heed the admonitions of the philosopher or follow the dictates of the statesman on what they considered to be the proper creative function of the artist. She was representative of those who liken the artist to an antenna which is sensitive to all about it and therefore reacts to all about it by expressing his likes and dislikes in formal design. Her philosophy of art is enhanced by the psychological thesis, which is borne out by an abundance of empirical data,<sup>1</sup> that the artist differs from other men because of his acute sensitivity and powerful imaginative faculty to change the actual world into one of make-believe, the real into fancy. He differs from other men, as Freud points out, because he understands how to elaborate the unfulfilled desires and hopes which are frittered away in the personal day and night dreams of ordinary men. He has a powerful capacity to sublimate his repressed desires and so vent his feelings through art.

The artistic personality has remained essentially the same throughout the centuries, even if social changes and cultural revolutions have been endless. The Greek artist's invocation of a Muse, the mystical contemplation of an El Greco, Haydn's ritual of going to the oratory to say an Ave and Dali's pseudo-religious trance prior to beginning a work of art are quite similar in purpose. This similarity lies in the desire to evoke a mood conducive to artistic creation. The process may however be of a converse nature in which a mood suddenly takes hold of the artist, and express himself he must. The latter is the more romantic notion, if not the accepted one, and, by the same token, the more questionable.

A mood, nevertheless, does take possession of the artist either by wilful indulgence to bring one about, in which the artist is not always successful, or in finding himself subject to some stimulus or series of stimuli which will bring into play associative memories and impressions that have long lain dormant in the unconscious faculty. The artist's production in turn instills a mood in the observer or listener and it is actually in recreating the artist's creation that we become lesser artists in our own right. Creation and recreation are after all not at great variance; still, a qualitative and quantitative

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<sup>1</sup> Julius Portnoy, *A Psychology of Art Creation*, Chapel Hill: 1942.

difference distinguishes the maker from the beholder. Quantitatively, the artist experiences life with a depth and emotional intensity that is more retentively sustaining, be it consciously or unconsciously, than the experiences of other men. It is not so much the varied experiences that life may afford him as the manner in which impressions, events and places register on his consciousness. Qualitatively, the artistic eye catches the essential and significant lines of a room, an object, or a human body and condenses them into a formal pattern, all of which may escape the layman's eye. Whatever psychic enrichment the artist gives to his medium of expression is born out of the frustration and achievement, the joy and the sorrow of his personal experience.

Blake, who saw himself as an intermediary between God and man, would not accept such an earthly account of the creative act. "I do not pretend to be any other than the secretary," he tells us, "the authors are in eternity." The more realistic Turgenev, by contrast, writes in his introduction to *Fathers and Sons* "I never attempted to create a type without having, not an idea, but a living person, in whom the various elements were harmonized together." The wealth of material which artists have left behind in which they describe the creative process bears out the view of Turgenev rather than Blake. Only a rare Shelley attributes poetic inspiration to transcendental realms. He would have us think that the motivating force presupposing poetic art is ineffable. But naturalism has long since regarded the claim of the mystic to penetrate to some ineffable "true" reality as a psychological self-delusion. Naturalism properly maintains that the ineffable must, as its name indicates, be thoroughly inexpressible.

Roger Fry is only somewhat less mystical than the poet Blake when he characterizes Cézanne as one haunted by a dream, seeking an *a priori* design which would embody the emotions of the inner life. But just how it is possible to achieve a quasi-metaphysical formula that would embody the emotions of the inner life goes unanswered. Both Fry and Bell, as aesthetic purists, maintain that the significance of art is unrelated to the significance of life both in creation and appreciation. The empirical data which can be gathered from the biographical notes of the pictorial artists contradict the neo-Platonic views of Fry and Bell by bearing out the contention that artistic creation is rooted in the soil of reality. Artistic creation is not a divine revelation in which the artist mystically intuits what Bell calls the "rhythm of reality" and then gratuitously passes it on to the few who can partake of this exalted experience. The artist is a product of his experience, of everyday experience. The artist is influenced by all that he has experienced. One cannot quarrel with the purist that art is more than the sum of the



artist's experience. Art does transcend and crystalize human feelings with its nostalgic memories and longing aspirations through the creation of an effective form framed in a sensuous medium. But the weight of evidence is on the side of the realist, that the artist's creation is based on his personal experience. Goethe stresses this subjectivity underlying art creation by saying "I have never uttered anything which I have not experienced. . . . I have only composed love songs when I have loved. How could I write songs of hatred without hating?"

Some aestheticians, who hold a midway position between the purist and realist, will argue that not all art is born of experience and moulded by emotion. They will point out that much art originates in a contemplative or thoughtful mood. But they do not explain what brings on a contemplative mood. Surely these reflective and pondering artistic tendencies are either caused by introspection or anxiety. An emotional condition creates an artistic mood and this mood in turn is recreated by the observer or listener. A mood is the effect whose cause is often unconscious in nature. Art is born of man's emotions to stir others' emotions. That is the nature and function of art.

It would be unreasonable indeed to assume that a theory of repressed emotion, developed along Freudian lines, could be an all inclusive argument for the nature of artistic creation, just as we cannot say that the Platonic theory of imitation or the play theory of Lange and Groos are fully convincing interpretations accounting for the origin of all art. Yet, what knowledge we have been able to glean from the description of the creative process, as various artists have attempted to describe the phenomenon in their diaries and autobiographies, is preponderantly emotive in character. Gauguin, for one, substantiates this belief by first asking "Where does the execution of a painting start, and where does it end?" To which he answers: "When extreme sentiments blend in the depths of a person, when they burst out, and when the entire mind flows out like the lava from a volcano, is that not the enthusiasm of a suddenly created work, brutal maybe, but great and of superhuman appearance? The cold calculations of reason have not presided over this emission, but who knows when the work was started in the depths of a person? Perhaps subconsciously?"<sup>2</sup> "No a thousand times no! The artist is not born all in one piece. It is much, if he adds a new link to the chain. Ideas are like dreams. A more or less formed assemblage of hinted things or thoughts. Indeed, does one know whence they come?"<sup>3</sup> "Let them look

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in John Rewald, *Gauguin*, p. 29; Hyperion Press; Paris: 1938.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

attentively at my last paintings (if ever they have a heart to feel) and they will see how much resigned suffering there can be. Is it nothing then, a human outcry?"<sup>4</sup> Here is a poignant illustration that the repressions of feelings and the impressions, memories and events that the artist stores away in his unconscious faculty are the heavily laden roots which are primary sources in the creation of art.

But how is the artist able to take the impressions and events of his daily life and convert them into a work of art? To begin with, the artist experiences life with a depth and emotional intensity that is more telling than the experiences of other men. He is also endowed with the ability to view men and objects and see them beyond their immediate practicality, or beyond their status as mere copies of the universal. The artist isolates his model, whether it be man or his handiwork, to see it as an independent form, not simply as a particular of a general class. These very impressions and memories which were received through the senses undergo a period of incubation or unconscious elaboration. During this time the artist is uncreative, bemoans his lack of originality and ordinarily applies himself to routine tasks.

When this dormant mass of impressions and memories has been sufficiently mulled over in the unconscious it may rise to a conscious level, fully crystallized, in one of two ways. First, in response to an external stimulus or series of stimuli this latent material comes to the fore spontaneously; or, secondly, the artist may deliberately indulge in a mood of reflection and introspection with the purpose of evoking an emotional mood conducive to creation. In the final phase of the creative act ideas flow easily, artistic problems long contemplated are solved. With a vivid imagination and able technique the artist shapes, colors, distorts and symbolizes his feelings by giving them a semblance of concreteness in an art form. Each artist expresses himself through the particular art form toward which he is inclined by virtue of natural endowment and training. Art creation is the conversion of human emotions which, fed by anxiety, apprehension, longing and anticipation, seek and find release in expression.

What distinguishes the maker from the beholder is sensitivity to formal design plus a technique which enables him to make concrete his visual and auditory phantasy. The artist can only express what he feels and what he feels is based on his experience. The sensitivity with which he reacts to his environment has such a profound emotional impact on him that he must of necessity create if he would retain his sanity. Technique can express no more

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

or less than what the artist feels. No one endowed with true artistic sensitivity need fear a lack of technique. To those who lament that they could move the world if they were only able to express what they feel Croce aptly answers that they either do not feel deeply enough or the feeling is too meager to be expressed. The artist is able to express himself so effectively because he feels so deeply. Those with technique alone must be reminded of Plato's admonition in the *Phaedrus* that "He who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks that he will get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his property are not admitted; the sane man disappears and is nowhere when he enters into rivalry with the madman."<sup>5</sup> In the same Platonic vein, Clive Bell concludes: "Art is not based on craft, but on sensibility; it does not live by honest labor, but inspiration."<sup>6</sup>

The artist is able to relate or portray the experiences of others and himself so effectively that the usual becomes unusual. He shows us the world as he sees it and we never have. Because of his fine sensitivity, he often rebels against the commonplace in society, satirizes the contented and mimics conventions which would confine him to a herd morality. Since he cannot actually re-make the world as he would wish it to be, he transfigures it into one of imaginative fancy through art. This is the basis for Plato's fear in the *Republic* when he speaks of the Greek bard as a restless and craving individual who must be held in constant restraint lest his effective expressions of discontent infect the populace.<sup>7</sup> This is what Schopenhauer meant in envisioning art creation as a psychological need which brought surcease from desire to the artist, freed him from the travail of a mundane existence and brought him closer to the universal. This is what Nietzsche meant in picturing art creation as a revolt against society by which the artist transcended his environment and transfigured it into an imaginative world of his own choosing. To these philosophic abstractions, Freud added that works of art are analogous in their modes of creation to dreams. Just as dreams afford us the experience of realizing our repressed desires in a world of phantasy so the artist achieves wish-fulfillment through his creation. The dreamer does not share his phantasy with others. The artist does communicate his wishes, desires and frustrations through art which symbolizes his repressions and aspirations.

The whole life of the artist comes to expression in his creations. A

<sup>5</sup> 245.

<sup>6</sup> *Art*, p. 287; Frederick A. Stokes Co. New York: 1913.

<sup>7</sup> 424.

process of sublimation converts his travail into a world of seeming. Frustration and anxiety find release in eidetic imagery, become symbols of emotional moods in an art form which the artist can view with a detached spirit. Although his art is moulded by environment and technique, it basically springs from emotion. A facile technique enables him to express what he wishes to convey emotionally, for technique is the cold logic of the intellect which shapes the raw emotion into formal patterns of artistic design. Technique is intrinsically bound up with artistic sensitivity and vision in the same manner as the intellect is with emotion. The artist's formal arrangement of patterns and designs are the objectification of anxiety and despair, as well as hope, even when appearances seem to deny it. He displays the same sensitivity in expressing himself in formal design as he did in observing nature and man. His art begins with the feelings, it culminates in design.



LEONARD ZAMISKA, "XOCHIMILCO." *Courtesy Cleveland Institute of Art.*

# AESTHETIC LIMITATIONS OF NON-OBJECTIVE PAINTING\*

*By Robert Enggass*

**N**ON-OBJECTIVE art has an ancient and continuous history. Decorative patterns—patterns whose forms bear no conscious or recognizable similarity to specific objects extant in the material world, or even to unnatural combinations and distortions of such objects—have been found on burial urns, clasps, belts, knife handles, tomb walls, clothing and other such useful objects created throughout every millennium and in every major area in which an artistic tradition has survived. The fact that a large number of such forms may refer to specific objects or concepts in the material world, not through similarity but through established symbolism, cannot be ignored. But it is sufficient to recognize that in recent centuries elaborate literary documentation demonstrates the existence of a large body of non-objective art used to decorate useful objects and devoid of any conscious symbolic intent. Widespread and continuous acceptance of such forms, usually among all levels of society, demonstrates that these forms give pleasure and have, for the most part, some aesthetic value. To deny this would be to deny the *raison d'être* of most of the minor arts, as well as most architectural decoration.† To admit this is, on the other hand, also to admit by implication that non-objective easel painting is at least potentially capable of having some aesthetic value. It does not, however, answer the question, "How much?"

While non-objective "decorative" painting is many millennia old, non-objective easel painting is only half a century young. Wassily Kandinsky claimed to have produced this type of art as early as 1911. Perhaps the date could be pushed back a bit earlier, but not much. In recent years the

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\* This article grew out of one of the art reviews published last spring in the University of Michigan Daily which caused enough discussion among artists and art historians, both student and faculty, to warrant, in my opinion, further development. In this I received invaluable advice from Prof. Forsyth, Chairman of Michigan's Fine Arts Dept. and Mr. Wight, of the staff of the Institute of Contemporary Art, in Boston. Neither Mr. Forsyth nor Mr. Wight can be blamed for any of the opinions expressed or shortcomings in the article, however.

† It must be noted at the outset that architecture itself, in contrast to architectural decorative motifs, bears no true relation to nonobjective painting. The aesthetics of architecture, deeply rooted in concepts of function and scale, not only differ widely from painting, but establish architecture in a sense as the least abstract of the arts.



output of non-objective easel painting has been enormous. Here in America the works of such men as Jackson Pollock, Theodore Stamos and Adolph Gottlieb are reproduced not only in the art magazines, but in such publications as the Magazine Section of the Sunday *New York Times*, and *Time* and *Life*. Easel painting based totally on color and formal design is now well established. It thus becomes pertinent to ask seriously and without mockery not whether non-objective painting is worthless and a fraud—for only the most intransigent or artistically illiterate hold this view—but whether these artists, for the most part capable and intelligent, have increased or diminished the scope of their art by the removal of all representational elements.

The contention of the non-objective easel painter is, as I see it, that by the removal of the representational, the emotions evoked by the formal elements may go directly to the observer without passing through, and probably being weakened by, the representational vehicle. In other words, an observer who felt a high degree of emotional excitation in the swirling lines and powerful colors of Franz Marc's painting *The Blue Horses* would nevertheless be almost inevitably led to consider his reaction to actual horses and be brought to associations and emotions whose free movement would be fettered by this specific representational stimulus.

The purpose of most non-objective easel painting is thus primarily to evoke emotions through visual designs and color, in the same way that "pure" or "absolute" music, such as Bach, evokes emotion through audible design and tone. This is evidenced not only by the terminology of non-objective artists and their supporting critics, but even occasionally in announced statements of purpose. Speaking of his discovery of non-objective art principles, Kandinsky says:

"But it became totally clear to me that art in general possessed a far greater power than I ever had imagined. I also realized that painting possesses the same power as music."<sup>1</sup>

or again:

"The compositional manner (of non-objective art) is a thing which has been known for centuries in music. In this respect the two arts have reached the same high plane. In both there is noticeable a growing tendency to perform "absolute" works; i.e. infinitely objective ones, which grow—like nature—out of themselves and by themselves.

This type of art is the closest one to the purely absolute in art, and these two are destined, perhaps, in the future, to represent the complete artistic creation."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography of Kandinsky*, pub. Dept. of Pictorial Art of the People's Commissariat of Education, Moscow, 1918, as quoted in *In Memory of Wassily Kandinsky*, Hilla Rebay, Ed., Museum of Non-Objective Painting, New York, 1945, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

In a similar way, Piet Mondriaan, another internationally famous non-objectivist, praises the rhythms of jazz and swing and in a manner followed by many younger artists gives his works such musical names as *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* and *Victory Boogie-Woogie*. *Victory Boogie-Woogie*, for example, owned by the Miller Company of Meriden, Conn., is exhibited around the country (in a version posthumously completed by others), with the accompaniment of twelve large and elaborately labeled charts which explain the painting's design in terms of physics, experimental psychology and absolute music. The charts purport to point out endless patterns of staggering complexity which form, shift and reform among the vast number of brightly colored rectilinear shapes which cover the surface of the canvas. But in actuality the eye is unable to separate this multiplicity of themes, minor themes, and thematic variations, and at the same time relate each one to its own nexus as well as to the overall whole. The eye can travel around the painting, but it can travel in any direction or path. While a good painting can guide the eye of the observer to two or three focal points in sequence, it is impossible to direct it through an elaborate pre-arranged maze. The eye will skip over "obstacles" and meander at the observer's caprice.

The reason for this is that painting lacks one great and major element that music has: time. A painting can be seen (though not comprehended) in a glance. In music each passage stands clearly differentiated from every other by time. The order of the relationships, and the development of themes is guided and given direction by the time element. It is impossible for the listener to skip over the introductory development by going directly to the climax and then return to sample at random the elements which give the climax its impact. This is of course because of music's high degree of control over the element of time. Easel painting has been said to have a time element also, and while this may be true in a limited sense, it is stretching the conventional meaning of the term. Any painting takes some time to look at, if one is to derive its full content. But, with the most trivial exceptions, the artist is powerless to control how long the observer looks at a painting or the sequence in which he will comprehend the various elements in the painting, or indeed whether he will take up these elements separately at all, since he may blend some or all of them into a total impression. The early decades of this century saw much experimentation with the time problem, but the results in painting have been quite limited. A cubist picture may show us several sides of a chair, which in real life we could only see by passing around it, an act requiring time. But the elements of the painting, in contrast to the material object which they represent, are seen almost simultaneously. The



term "simultaneity" used by Alfred Barr and others to explain this technique only underlines the point. The same is of course true of Futurist Art. A painting of a dog with sixteen legs may give the illusion of four legs moving through time and space, but what you actually see is sixteen legs and you see that at a glance.

Thus painting by its very nature cannot contain a time element of any prolonged and fixed duration or divisible with any exactitude. The result is that while simple themes and their counterpoints can be quickly distinguished, an elaborate nexus of major and minor themes and their complex variations becomes incomprehensible even to a majority of intelligent and art-conscious observers. What happens is that the relationships between the various parts break down, no matter how carefully they have been thought out by the artist, and the impression which the observer normally receives is a collective one, made up of a fusing of most of the elements of such a painting. A deliberately exaggerated simile will illustrate the point. The eighteenth century, rich in formal abstract theory, produced that curious invention, the smell-piano, an instrument whose keys when struck would uncork bottles containing various odors. The idea was formally sound, but of course all the odors blended into one big undifferentiated smell. Patternization was impossible. The resultant smell may possibly have been pleasing, but it could hardly have produced an aesthetic reaction that was intellectually profound.

The limitations of the medium place pure non-objective art in a similar position. Without the ability clearly to differentiate complex patterns, it must remain decorative in the aesthetic reaction it produces, even though it is not used to decorate a useful object. Our reactions to such a work may be pleasant, indeed delightful. But if we wish to preserve a unified totality (without which there can be an intellectual process but no art), they must of necessity be limited.

But the individual whose intellectual development is highly cultivated, and whose emotional development has matured and deepened, can receive profound and sustained pleasure from a pure formal design only if the richness of its variety evokes the wealth of development of his own emotional history. Otherwise, what delights him at first glance will bore him under prolonged inspection.

It is this dilemma which establishes the aesthetic limitations of pure non-objective art. If it is to be simple, it can be delightful, but only on a surface level. If it is highly complex there are two (sympathetic) alternatives. The observer can reimpose a simplicity by fusing most of the component relationships. Or he can attempt to dissect, intellectually and one at a time,

the myriad of minor elements and relationships in the painting. This laborious process of disentanglement, in most cases hopeless, will cause him to lose sight not only of the harmonic unity, but of most of the relationships between the major passages as well. It will become an interesting intellectual game, but it will cease to be an art. A prolonged and intensive study of any of the more recent non-objective paintings by Jackson Pollack will illustrate my point.

Representational art can, as everyone knows, escape these limitations. The basic elements of almost all the designs that occur in non-objective art can occur in representational art as well. But to this can be added subject matter whose reference in the material world—the world of specific human experience—can evoke a profound and sustained response in observers of even the most developed emotional maturity. This is of course not because of the subject matter alone, but because the emotional impact carried by the subject, or a part of the subject, is re-enforced and generalized by each line and color in the design, while the emotional overtones inherent in the design are enhanced by the subject matter. Associative waves tend to broaden outward from the specific to the general, carried by the subject-enriched design, so that the aesthetic response may identify not only with the private emotional structure of the individual observer, but with his formulation of great universals as well. The themes having once been established in terms of one or a few significant emotions, the unity is not lost as the observer dwells on the multiplicity of elements which re-enforce those themes. A brimming cornucopia of variety will not destroy the fundamental harmonic unity.

The men who pioneered in the development of pure non-objective easel painting, and who sought to bring the formal techniques of pure music to their medium, did not recognize, at least on a conscious level, any representational elements in their works. But there are some artists and critics today who assert that there is no such thing as pure non-objective art. This group, which for want of a better name I will call the Psychoanalytic school, contend that formal elements of painting contain, or can contain, symbols; and that by the removal of the conscious symbol, as in conventionally representational painting, the subconscious mind of both the artist and the observer are given a freer hand. They feel moreover that as painting becomes less suppressed, and the artist's subconscious drives become more sophisticated and move toward the conscious level, near-recognizable pictographs come into existence, which can and do communicate to the observer profound and sustained emotions.

This argument, that non-objective painting regains the power potential

of representational painting by ceasing to be purely non-objective, is certainly a strong one. I feel that even there however, there are some serious limitations. First there is the question of art as communication. While most representational symbolism operates on principles of close similarity (e.g., a picture of a horse symbolizes an actual horse), and thus forms a language in large measure common to all mankind, gained early in life and without much effort, the symbolism of the subconscious reaches the conscious mind slowly, with great effort, and is the property of the select few. I cannot imagine that as much as one percent of the world's people will ever come to learn fully the language of psychoanalytic symbolism. Moreover while profound concepts are usually hard to grasp, they are rendered far more communicable if we are led to them through levels of meaning which we find familiar and clear.

Furthermore, as everyone who is familiar with Rorschach-type psychiatric tests knows, supposedly non-objective shapes symbolize radically different things to different people. While there are a few shapes, such as the hood ornament on the Buick, that carry a fixed symbolism on the Freudian level, such symbols are restricted to a rigorously limited set of subjects.

This brings us to the point that many of the subjects which may have come straight from the artist's subconscious might have had shock value for us in the early decades of the century, but now, under the pressure of constant repetition, they are becoming rather dull.

Finally, while this new symbolism may be profound, and touch on concepts held in common by the whole human race, they are devoid of those familiar elements of the individual human experience which belong to the epoch and the region which have nourished the artist. Who, in even briefly sampling from the widely varied history of art, will deny that the vocabulary of the region and the epoch lend it much of its rich diversity and its charm?

All this is by no means to say that the directions of contemporary art have been bad or unrewarding. Incalculable service has been rendered by those men, from Cézanne on, who clarified and reasserted the significance of the basic elements of design. Moreover, new media, such as the abstract cinema and the mobile, have been developed which have given non-objective art a wider scope.

The most rewarding direction for the contemporary artist lies in the further development and humanization of these potentially broader techniques.

# KINDERGARTEN AND BAUHAUS

By Frederick M. Logan

THE history and literature of the Kindergarten, first established by Friederich August Froebel in Blankenburg, Germany in 1837, has little direct significance to art education as we know it today. The philosophy of its leaders and the program of the children's activities, however, bear an amazing relationship to contemporary art and art education particularly during the early years of its rapid growth.

Official interest and recognition for Froebel and his devoted associates came in 1852, only a few months before his death, when he addressed a teachers' convention at Gotha on the subject of his kindergarten and its operation. An American woman, Elizabeth Peabody, established an infants' school in Boston in 1858-59 and at that time wrote the first edition of her *Guide to the Kindergarten and Intermediate Class*. However, after her trip to Germany in 1867, she revised the book, rejected her claims for the earlier school on the basis that it was not a true Kindergarten, and became a whole-hearted Froebel disciple. The years 1869 to 1873 saw, in America, the establishment of several Kindergartens as well as Normal Schools for Kindergarten training by Froebel students.

Froebel was the great leader. He was one of those men who inspired great loyalties and high idealism. Wilhelm Middendorf and Johannes Barop married sisters of Froebel and, together with their wives, devoted themselves and whatever small fortunes they had to the realization of Froebel's dreams. In return for this whole-hearted devotion they were often rewarded by displays of impatience, mistrust, and jealousy; for Froebel was apparently a creative genius who, while demanding absolute loyalty and unlimited effort from his colleagues, vented his own small animosities on them and displayed utter ruthlessness in seeking to realize his vision of the true education for young children.

The Kindergarten was indeed a work of art with Froebel. He planned it with all the intensity and passion of the artist and lived for nothing else. He dreamed of kindergarten education as the savior of the generations to come, as the guide to proper motherhood, even as the means of improving the world through the adults who had been in kindergarten and who would be superior as citizens to all the millions of people whose early childhood had been blighted and misdirected.

In what aspects of the Kindergarten, particularly as its American

enthusiasts interpreted it after 1870, do we find significance for the future of art education? The best statement of intent can be found in a paper by Elizabeth Peabody published in 1870, *A Plea for Froebel's Kindergarten as the First Grade of Primary Art Education*.<sup>1</sup> "Froebel's Kindergarten is a primary art school"; she wrote, "for it employs the prodigious but originally blind activity and easily trained hand of childhood, from the age of three years, in intelligent production of things within the childish sphere of affection and fancy; giving thereby a harmonious play of heart and mind in actively educating—without straining the brain—even to the point of developing invention, while it keeps the temper sweet and spirits joyous with the pleasure of success. Childish play has all the main characteristics of art, inasmuch as it is the endeavor to conform the outward show of things to the desires of the mind. Every child at play is histrionic and plastic. He personates character with mimic gesture and costume, and represents whatever fancy interests him by an embodiment of it—perhaps in mud or as a row of footstools and chairs, which become a railroad train to him at his "own sweet will."

A single sentence sums up Miss Peabody's view of the art of the Kindergarten, "The divine impulse of activity is never directly opposed in the Kindergarten, but accepted and guided into beautiful *production* according to the laws of creative order."<sup>2</sup>

Activity guided and directed was obviously the foundation for Kindergarten education. The games and the singing, the small gardens planted, the stories told and the stories invented together, and the physical exercise for indoors and out, were all part of the active program for each day and week.

It is the Froebel "Gifts" and "Occupations" that the twentieth century art teacher will find fascinating and provocative, and that have had considerable direct influence on contemporary art forms. Two great artists who used the Kindergarten Gifts as children were Frank Lloyd Wright<sup>3</sup> and Wassily Kandinsky.<sup>4</sup> Let us first list and describe briefly the "Gifts" which these two internationally known artists, among thousands of other children, knew and remembered from their childhood, before we examine their effect on Twentieth Century Art.

The First Gift was six worsted yarn balls of the colors of the rain-

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<sup>1</sup> "Papers on Froebel's Kindergarten" republished from *The American Journal of Education*. 1890. P. 674.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 675.

<sup>3</sup> Wright, Frank Lloyd, "An Autobiography," 1943, p. 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> Rebay, Hilla, ed. "Kandinsky," Guggenheim Foundation, 1945, p. 23.



bow. As with all the Gifts these balls were not meant to be played with idly, but were expected to help the child, through direct manipulation and play, to form concepts of color, of texture, of size, of number, and of creative arrangements.

The Second Gift consisted of a set of pieces of wood, including a solid sphere, a cube, and a cylinder.

The Third Gift was a two inch cube divided equally once in each direction, producing eight small cubes.

The Fourth Gift was a two inch cube divided by one vertical and two horizontal cuts into eight rectangular parallelepipeds. Each of the parallelepipeds was two inches long, one inch broad, and half an inch thick. These descriptions in proper solid geometrical terms were important to the Kindergartner and were always given in this way. The effort to understand geometrical forms and relationships was firmly insisted upon. Play was expected and encouraged but it was always to be directed toward the grasp of what seems to us startlingly abstract concepts for young children.

The Fifth Gift was a three inch cube divided equally twice in each dimension into twenty-seven small cubes. Three of these were in turn divided by one diagonal cut into two triangular parts, and three by two diagonal cuts into four triangular parts.

The Sixth Gift was a cube of three inches divided into twenty-seven parallelepipeds of the same dimensions as those of the Fourth Gift. Three of these were divided lengthwise into square prisms, two inches long, half an inch wide and half an inch thick, and six were divided crosswise into square tablets an inch square and half an inch thick. There were thus thirty-six pieces in the set.

The Seventh Gift was a group of square and triangular tablets, including four different triangles, equilateral, right, and obtuse isosceles, and right scalene.

The Eighth Gift was a group of connected slats. The Ninth Gift was a set of disconnected slats.

The Tenth Gift was a set of wooden sticks of several lengths. The Eleventh Gift was a set of whole and half wire rings of several diameters.

One of the early American Kindergartners, Miss Susan E. Blow of St. Louis describes the importance of the Gifts in a way that reminds us of the writings of Le Corbusier and Gropius, of painters like Feininger, and of the approach to design in almost any field of the present day. She writes,<sup>5</sup> "... we see at once that their (the Gifts) basis is mathematical,

and we notice that they illustrate successively the solid, the plane, and the line. We perceive, too, that they progress from undivided to divided wholes, and from these to separate and independent elements. Finally we observe that there is a suggestiveness in the earlier Gifts which the later ones lack, while on the other hand the range of the latter far exceeds that of the former. The meaning of these distinctions and connections will grow clear to us as we study the common objects of the varied Gifts. These objects are:

I. To aid the mind to abstract the essential qualities of objects by the representation of striking contrasts.

II. To lead to the classification of external objects by the presentation of typical forms.

III. To illustrate fundamental truths through simple applications.

IV. To stimulate creative activity."

The European creators of the Kindergarten and the great propagandists and organizers who spread the gospel of Froebel, in Europe and America, were generally well educated people actively interested in the arts and sciences. Their great work for the Kindergarten and faith in it was based on the belief that young children could best be started on an education through sense experience and by learning basic abstract relationships through the handling of objects and materials.

The Kindergarten "Occupations" further reinforced this approach. They were: Perforating, Sewing, Drawing, Inter-twining, Weaving, Folding, Cutting, Peas-work, Card-board and Clay-modeling. The Perforating was done with a sharp pointed tool into paper, producing figures and pictures. The Sewing was done from hole to hole on these perforated pictures. The Drawing was first a copy of the perforated and sewn figures and this was followed by the drawing of simple geometrical forms possible to do with vertical and horizontal lines. Inter-twining was done with paper strips of different colors. Folding and cutting of paper taught children to make certain standard constructions and then to try variations and combinations in the colored papers, inventing form constructions of their own. The Peas-work, done at that time with pointed sticks stuck into soaked peas, has since developed into the ever-popular Tinker Toy. Card-board cutting and shaping and Clay-modeling were, again, used to form the simple geometrical shapes.

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\* "Some Aspects of the Kindergarten" from Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers, p. 601.

All of this Kindergarten work was deliberately planned to conform to children's inevitable and incessant activity. But the Kindergarten went beyond the idea of activity as a release of energy to be alternated with the restraint of book learning. Kindergartners determined to create the base, even for book learning, upon learning from activity. Activity was planned to occur in such a manner (the Occupations), and with such materials (the Gifts), as to help children to understand the relationships of materials and the physical abstractions of the whole culture.

During a century of school growth there has been a slow change of attitude concerning all levels of school work. At first even the most enthusiastic of school superintendents like William T. Harris of St. Louis,<sup>6</sup> lauded the kindergarten because it offered manual activity and training at a time of life when the child was not ripe for more intellectual fare. Harris was of the belief that the child's time past the age of seven was too valuable for the "learning of a handicraft . . . ; the general disciplines of reading, writing, and arithmetic, etc., and drawing . . ." he believed must take over after the happy years of kindergarten. Today it is evident that through the inspiration of the kindergarten, education through the senses and through activity has increased each year and in every part of the school system. Art programs have nearly always shared in the extension of education to more inclusive sensory forms.

What has not been as obvious and has not been as widely noted is the exact nature of the original kindergarten activities in relation to present art forms and to contemporary art education. It has been said that Frank Lloyd Wright and Kandinsky were given kindergarten materials as children. How many more of the western world's present group of senior artists in painting, architecture, music and other arts were not only actually enrolled in Kindergartens during the years of its most earnest growth, but also acknowledged and developed these ideas in their mature work of later years, would make a rewarding subject for inquiry.

Miss Susan Blow, quoted earlier, virtually prepared a preface to a twentieth century design course when she wrote as follows on the Occupations.

"But we must be conscious of ideas before we can express them, and we must gain the mastery of material before we can use it as a means of expression."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Kindergarten in the Public School System" Prepared for Meeting of the American Froebel Union, Dec. 1879—Kindergarten & Child Culture Papers.

<sup>7</sup> Same as no. 4, p. 613.

We must think of this comment as applying to the constant use of abstract block forms, thread, paper strips, and of sticks as materials for creative constructions by children. Then notice that drawing in the Kindergarten was taught as a rigid discipline leading eventually to naturalistic drawing of academic excellence. Free creation was in terms of abstract forms and bits of material. Drawing, on the other hand, was a prescribed form of visual grammar.

"In abstract art," wrote Piet Mondriaan in 1941, "we see . . . clearly. There the elements of form are no longer veiled by the limited (the naturalistic) forms but appear as the expressive means."<sup>8</sup> Mondriaan's reference to naturalistic, pictorial forms is always as "limited" or "limiting," and while that view of the pictorial vocabulary was not what kindergarten teachers had in mind in their teaching, it may have been the emotional feeling conveyed to the creative children of many school generations.

A large proportion of the dominant performers and thinkers in the arts who are now sixty years of age or older write and speak in some such vein—that the eclectic architectural forms, the design shapes of historical periods, the primarily naturalistic pictorial representation—have all become tyrannical forms, limiting art expression; and further that the great need of expression in their work was the recasting of art in fundamental structural shapes.

Since 1900 Kindergarten activity has not diminished, but it has changed. To use a common arts terminology, the child activity has become more individualistic, more romantic in nature, rather than continuing the classical pattern of the strictly Froebelian period. Kindergarten children today use a great variety of materials. There are innumerable forms of commercially prepared play sets for the building of play houses and stores and whole villages. Lengths of wrapping paper, jars of water-soluble paints, crocks of clay, packets of colored papers, boxes of crayons, and other materials as occasion demands, are generally available. Many simple tools and adequate table space for working are considered as of prime necessity in the Kindergarten.

In using all these things the children are given every encouragement to act creatively. The individuality of each child is important and their choice of activity is respected with the hope of discovering and developing distinctive personality traits. At the same time there is a healthy interest

<sup>8</sup> Mondriaan, Piet, "Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art," *Documents of Modern Art* 3, 1947.

in the individual's adjustment to the social group; both in using the opportunities which the group makes possible for each child, and in assuming the responsibilities which each member must have within the class.

What is most conspicuously lacking in the present day Kindergarten as compared to the regime of Froebel is the deliberate effort to teach a series of concepts about geometrical solids, about simple tool operations needed in the Occupations, concepts about color relationships, and about the nature and quality of the materials being used. Some of the learning objectives set up for the Kindergarten of Froebel made it, in the current use of the term, a classical art academy for little children.

A new classical academy in adult art education has, since 1920, been extending its generally beneficent influence. It has been inventing and evolving a visual and tactile education of the senses as a foundation for contemporary artistic creation. Inevitably its influence is spreading first to most of the courses in art schools, in colleges and universities, and then downward chronologically to younger students through the work of teachers recently graduated from their professional art education courses.

The modern Academy here described, such as the Bauhaus of Germany and its ramified American off-shoots, today is stressing, as the Kindergarten tried to do in 1852, that education through vision and the sense of touch, and by means of the great richness of materials and tools now available, is all important.

There are three major implications in the basic work of the Bauhaus. First there is the fact that the interpretation of a liberal education must be and is being changed to include sensory education as a most important aspect of aesthetic comprehension. Secondly there is the obvious inference that professional art education must be based, not on coddling abnormal student "sensitivities" or on a craving for a refuge from a coarse world, but on a factual, even scientific grasp of the media of the arts. The student must learn to exploit visual and tactile manipulation to the full; and he must still possess the artist's desire to put his ideas into aesthetic form.

Lastly, this new academy of the Bauhaus suggests an expanded course of experience for children. The present emphasis upon free expression in paint or clay has seemed desirable in many ways. At the lower age levels, little or no teaching has been done other than offering help merely in the use of materials. The end product for child and teacher has been personally interpreted paintings and three dimensional objects which at



their best represent a satisfying experience for the child in symbolizing experience.

But creative expression exclusively on a plane of free handling of art forms is actually limiting to some children, in that some other expression may be of equal value. We may well begin to see a revival of more precisely limited and defined experiences with materials, a sort of re-definition of the Gifts and Occupations which will better combine with the values of the more individualistic experiences now so common.

These experiences would necessarily be formulated to begin the child's familiarity with objects and materials that we know today, pragmatically, scientifically, and aesthetically. The specific objects used might be different from Froebel's, but the aims would be very like his. These avenues of speculation are opened not only by the comparison of the Kindergarten and the Bauhaus, but are inherent in many aspects of educational philosophy since 1900, in the several modern art movements, and in the observation of the whole progress of public education.



ILLUSTRATION FOR FROEBEL'S "THE NINTH GIFT,"  
from *Steiger's Kindergarten Material*.

# THE INFORMATION FILM IN ART

*By Sidney Berkowitz*

**T**HE use of Information films in the teaching of art is being neglected and its status in the methodology of instruction is that of a poor and unwanted relation.

Visual-Aids in art education has won acceptance as the most effective medium. That acceptance is based on the whole experience in the documentary field: Information Art Films embody all of the elements of visual contact. They present unlimited Forum possibilities with Film Strips and slides. They provide a stimulating relationship with reproductions for purposes of emphasis. They enlist the support and interest of students who might otherwise be bored with reading abstract words about an abstract subject (i.e., non-objective art).

Dr. Charles Seipmann, former director of adult education for the British Broadcasting Company, now chairman of the Department of Communications, School of Education, N.Y.U., states:

"Visual language which, as in great films, informs even inanimate objects with a life and meaning of their own, by the selective focusing of our attention and, with the play upon a face by lighting and angle, can make its silence speak volumes. . . . Films can be used when they are wanted. They are, moreover, permanent and lend themselves to repeated use. Films offer a wider 'canvas' on which demonstrations . . . can be given with much greater clarity. What we see dominates what we hear . . . and we unconsciously lend ourselves to a new form of visual language. . . . Films can be made anywhere . . . and brought to the classrooms. If the scope for documentary films is, at this moment, somewhat restricted, if also . . . the means for their distribution are uncoordinated, prospects are far less gloomy than one . . . might be led to suppose. . . . The growth of film councils and film societies . . . appears to be sturdy and expansive. . . . The belated recognition of the value of films in the classrooms also gives ground for hope." In a report for the Carnegie Foundation, Mary Losey stated: It is generally agreed that the bottleneck which is holding back progress of the motion picture in the service of education is a failure of organization and plan. Production, projection facilities and audiences are available in abundance. . . . For the meaningful development of the visual media in education and information some plan designed to define and meet the real public need is necessary. . . . During the

war . . . people were . . . visually educated with a vengeance. The War Department, The Treasury Department, The OWI, The OPA, The OCD, and the rest of the alphabet descended upon them. Before you could say Okinawa they were being seated in rows before a portable screen and 'shown' what the war was all about, how it looked on the beaches of Dunkirk, what strategy Montgomery employed to trap the Desert Fox, how Jimmy Stewart felt about the Air Forces, the history of fascism, China's struggle, Canada's industry, kill or be killed, Clark Gable in a B-29, how to become a riveter, the principles of the micrometer, the Battle of San Pietro, Listen to Britain, Target For Tonight, how to save fats, and above all BUY WAR BONDS. It was a vast success and literally thousands upon thousands of audiences which had never before thought of the existence of the non-theatrical or documentary film were regimented and indoctrinated."

They have not, like the Arabs by night, silently folded their tents and quietly slipped away. Quite the contrary. They are still there. . . . Many . . . have firmly taken hold of the idea that films can be useful to any communication of ideas. . . .

The Office of Education produced several hundred films during the last war designed to speed the training of war plant workers and increase war production. These films and many like them proved the remarkable gifts of the motion picture medium for explanation, demonstration, simplification, and instruction. Where individual demonstration would have taken one hundred separate man hours a single film could perform the same demonstration and better on a screen for hundreds of workers at one time. Where spoken and written words were half understood, diagram and action were clear and intelligible. Where half literate minds were unable to grasp abstract scientific principles, animated cartoons could make them as real as a shovel or a wrench.

In the light of this knowledge it becomes evident that films are the most effective means of supplementing the present media for the teaching of art. Some institutions on the collegiate level are already using films for this purpose, but all too few. And on the elementary and intermediate level, the use of films is practically nil.

Part of the answer to the problem lies in the absence of a central repository of film information, readily available to teachers throughout the country, which would serve to eliminate the physical obstacles which confront those who are film conscious and simplify the work of those who are not yet aware of the vast potential of films.

A typical experience is that of a young candidate for the Master's Degree in Education at N.Y.U., who was required to obtain films for showings to her classes as part of the teacher training program. After a considerable amount of correspondence, telephoning and personal shopping, she was able to locate a suitable film. When the film arrived, she was informed by the head of the High School to which she was assigned that no funds were available for films. In order to comply with the requirements of her assignment, the student paid for the film from her own meager funds.

The time and energy expended in her search could have been greatly reduced and her effectiveness as a student teacher increased if she had had readily available, the following information:

The Educational Film Guide, published annually, lists 7030 films. All are 16mm films and include such art films as the Creative Hands series.

The Blue Book of 16mm films lists 6792 films under 173 Subject headings for rent or sale.

The United States Government has available 1330 films on every conceivable subject. *All Are Available Free of Charge.*

The Film Council of America's Film Reference Shelf includes *The Educator's Guide to Free Films.*

The Department of Agriculture Motion Picture Catalogue lists State Film Libraries in every state in the union from which films may be obtained free.

The Federal Security Agency Office of Education Directory of Films lists 897 16mm Film Libraries covering every state in the union from which free films may be obtained.

The Guide to Art Films (second edition), published by the Magazine of Art under the sponsorship of the American Federation of Art, contains 353 titles covering every phase of art.

There is however, another side to the picture. The procurement procedures by which films may be rented when the available free films are not suitable for the particular class. Films are available on every art subject from finger painting to the sculpture of Maillol. The Blue Book of Films lists 152 films on art subjects ranging from an exhibition of children's paintings to films of Thomas Hart Benton, William Gropper, Eliot O'Hara, Charles Martin, Adolph Dehn, George Grosz and Doug Kingman at work. Titles include Modern Art of Poland, Ritual in Transfigured Time, Painters of Quebec, Clay in Action, From Clay to Bronze, The Making of a Mural and Painting in Oil. Yet an instructor at Columbia

Teachers College in New York City tells me that one of the chief obstacles interfering with the showing of films is the lack of a projector.

When more college Arts teachers begin to realize the possibilities in the use of films, when the students who learn by this method of teaching go out into the world and spread the word and thereby help to create a demand for better facilities for the showing of films, the result will be more and better films on all art subjects and a closer co-operation between film makers and educators. *The Magazine of Art* is showing the way by being the first publication to review Art films.

And no less a person than Earl J. McGrath, Commissioner of Education, has gone on record with this statement: "Visual Education is still new. The schools have only begun to realize the great potential of the motion picture and of other . . . pictorial forms of communication. Much needs to be done before real progress can be made in applying to the problems of education the values and the assistance available in these new tools of instruction."

Information regarding these new materials does not come to the teacher's desk through traditional and well-established channels. One of the more troublesome problems of teachers interested in the use of films and of other visual aids is that of discovering what aids are available, and where they may be secured.

In a report on "The Outlook for the Profitable Production of Documentary Films for the Non-theatrical Market," Mary Losey states:

"Very high on the list is the demand for subjects on the arts. A surprising example is the film produced by OSS during the war on the National Gallery in Washington and released later through the State Department. It has been put out in Chinese, Dutch, Danish, Bulgarian, Czech, French, Finnish, Flemish, Hungarian, Italian, Greek, Norwegian, Portuguese, Polish, Roumanian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish and Thai. There are 285 prints of it abroad and it is one of the most popular of the Department's films although by no means one of the best. The subject was so successful in fact they also put out 80 prints of a . . . film produced by the Department of Agriculture called PATTERNS OF RURAL ART."

This fall UNESCO expects to receive a report on all existing available art films. It is hoped the publication of this list to its member governments will stimulate a demand and an active effort to get more and better films in all the fields of UNESCO's interest. Eventually UNESCO and the UN will, between them, become the clearing house for international



exchange of all kinds of educational and cultural materials.

Affiliated Film Producers, a cooperative of four documentary producers who have been principally responsible for the higher quality documentary productions of the State Department and before that of OWI Overseas, are making two films at the moment, one on the photography of Edward Weston, and one on the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe. They are part of a series of State Department subjects generally titled, *The American Scene*, and weave the work of the two artists into a pictorial appreciation of the respective sections of the country with which they are concerned.

Add to all these more or less specific evidences of interest and activities the fact that the somewhat nebulous field of adult education is growing by leaps and bounds. In the arts fields specifically the Chicago Art Institute turned away thousands of students a year or so ago, and even at that, had an enrollment of 6,000, an enormous increase over its pre-war record. The G.I. Bill and other factors such as high employment are influencing this trend but they can not entirely account for it.

All in all there is sufficient evidence even on the basis of so brief an investigation to justify belief that the interests and accomplishments which used to be the special possession of a privileged few are becoming the common interests of many. And if this is true the mass media will play a large part both in bringing about the change and in supplying the new-found audience.

One other significant note on the subject of equipment for the visual media. Vernon Dameron, Head of the Division of Audio-Visual Instruction, NEA, states that there are already over 100,000 film strip projectors in the American public schools and the sales of this equipment will continue to move ahead during the coming years. "Film strips are . . . a newer and more efficient form of lantern slide. A single strip can contain anywhere up to 100 separate stills, although the majority are more nearly 40 frames long. Furthermore, the film strip which can be controlled by the teacher, run forward or back, stopped in the middle and discussed, or held on the screen as long as it is needed for explanatory remarks has many advantages for instructional purposes. . . ."

Last, but not least, remember that the child who develops a lively interest in art during the formative years will carry that interest over into adult life. Plainly indicated is the need to incorporate into the National school program a sound plan to expedite the inclusion of documentary films as part of the regular school curriculum. A minimum of 30 minutes a day should be allotted for films on the elementary and high school levels.

High school seniors could be given credit for their participation as pre-viewers and custodians of the films. By the time these students reached college level they would have a background of Documentary film appreciation that would greatly simplify the efforts of the College Arts teachers. The least possible result of such a plan would be the constant development of a growing art audience without which the artist is but a voice crying in the wilderness.

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## E. L. KIRCHNER'S "CHRONIK DER BRÜCKE"\*

By Peter Selz

"IN THE year 1902 the painters Bleyl and Kirchner met in Dresden. Heckel came to them through his brother, a friend of Kirchner. Heckel brought Schmidt-Rottluff along, whom he knew from Chemnitz. They came together in Kirchner's studio to work there. Here they found the opportunity to study the nude—the basis of all visual art—in its natural freedom. From drawing on this basis resulted the desire, common to all, to derive inspiration for work from life itself, and to submit to direct experience. In a book, *Odi profanum*, each individual drew and wrote down his ideas, and in this way they made it possible to compare their distinctive features. So they grew, very naturally, into a group which came to be called 'Brücke.' One inspired the other. From southern Germany Kirchner brought the woodcut, which he had revived under the inspiration of the old prints in Nürnberg. Heckel carved wooden figures. Kirchner enriched this technique with polychromy and sought the rhythm of closed form in pewter casting and in stone. Schmidt-Rottluff made the first lithographs on stone. The first exhibition of the group took place on its own premises in Dresden; it was given no recognition. Dresden, however, yielded much inspiration through its scenic charm and old culture. Here 'Brücke' also found its first art-historical corroboration in Cranach, Beham and other medieval German masters. During an exhibit of Amiet in Dresden he was appointed to membership in the group. In 1905 Nolde followed, his fantastic style bringing a new feature to 'Brücke.' He enriched our exhibitions with his interesting etching technique and learned how we worked with the woodcut. On his invitation Schmidt-Rottluff went with him to Alsen, and later Schmidt-Rottluff and Heckel went to Dangast. The brisk air of the North Sea brought forth a monumental Impressionism, especially in Schmidt-Rottluff. During this time, in Dresden, Kirchner continued to work in closed composition and in the ethnographic museum found a parallel to his own creation in African negro sculpture and in Oceanic beam carvings. The desire to free himself from academic sterility led Pechstein to join 'Brücke.' Kirchner and Pechstein went to Gollverode, to work there together. An exhibition of 'Brücke,' including its new members, took place in the Salon Richter in Dresden and made a great impression on the young artists of Dresden. Heckel and Kirchner attempted to bring the new painting and its exhibition space into harmony. Kirchner furnished the rooms with murals and batiks, on which Heckel had worked with him. In 1907 Nolde resigned from 'Brücke'; Heckel and Kirchner went to the Moritzburg lakes, in order to study the nude in the open air; Schmidt-Rottluff worked in Dangast on the completion

\* This article is part of a book on German Expressionist Painting, which is scheduled for publication in the near future.

of his color rhythm; Heckel travelled to Italy and brought back with him the inspiration of Etruscan art; Pechstein went to Berlin to work on a commission for decorations. He attempted to bring the new painting into the 'Sezession.' In Dresden Kirchner studied the hand printing of lithography. Bleyl, who had gone into teaching, left 'Brücke' in 1909. Pechstein went to Dangast to join Heckel. During the same year both of them came to Kirchner at Moritzburg in order to do studies of the nude in the lake environment. In 1910 the 'Neue Sezession' was organized after the rejection of younger German painters by the old 'Sezession.' In order to support Pechstein's position in the 'Neue Sezession' Heckel, Kirchner and Schmidt-Rottluff also became members. In the first exhibition of the 'Neue Sezession' they met Mueller. In his studio they saw Cranach's 'Venus,' which they themselves had always esteemed very highly. The sensuous harmony of his life with his work made Mueller a natural member of 'Brücke.' He introduced us to the fascination of distemper technique. In order to keep their endeavors pure the members of 'Brücke' resigned from membership in the 'Neue Sezession.' They exchanged promises to exhibit only jointly in the 'Sezession.' Then followed an exhibit of 'Brücke' in the entire gallery of the art salon, Gurlitt. Pechstein broke the confidence of the group by becoming a member of the 'Sezession,' and was expelled from 'Brücke.' The 'Sonderbund' invited 'Brücke' to join its Cologne exhibition of 1912, and commissioned Heckel and Kirchner to decorate and paint the chapel of the exhibition rooms. The majority of the members of 'Brücke' is now in Berlin. 'Brücke' has retained here its intrinsic character. From its internal coherence it radiates the new values of artistic creation to the modern artistic production throughout Germany. Uninfluenced by contemporary movements of cubism, futurism, etc., it fights for a human culture, the soil of all real art. 'Brücke' owes its present position in the art world to these goals."

#### E. L. Kirchner

In the summer of 1948 the Kunsthalle in Bern arranged a retrospective show of the "Brücke," that group of German painters and printmakers which marked the onset of German Expressionism. In the catalog of the Bern exhibition is published for the first time a highly significant document, the "Chronik der Brücke." This was written by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in 1913, but had never before been published. Kirchner wrote it without consulting his associates—the fact which was the immediate cause for the break-up at that time of the closely-knit group of artists who considered it a very one-sided account of their activities. In translating I have deliberately retained the style of the original with its choppy, broken sentences, strange phraseology, and somewhat disconnected ideas, for Kirchner's "telegraphic" style is part and parcel of the Expressionist manner.

The formation of the group in 1905 was one of the most revolutionary

events in the history of modern painting. Impressionism had just made its inroads in Germany—a generation late—together with the post-Impressionism of Cézanne, Seurat, and Gauguin. Munch and Van Gogh, the most important pre-Expressionists were barely known, and Fauvism had by no means travelled across the Rhine. Paula Modersohn-Becker, that primitivistic pioneer of the Expressionist movement in Germany, was not known beyond the limits of the artists' colony at Worpswede.

In 1905 four students of architecture at the polytechnic institute in Dresden threw over their academic studies to devote themselves to painting and printmaking. They were Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel, Karl Schmidt from Rottluff (called Schmidt-Rottluff), and Fritz Bleyl. It was not on programmatic issues that these men came together, but out of a positive and intuitive attitude towards art and life in general. If their painting with its large planes of vibrant color is at times similar to that of the Fauves, their motive was not primarily the struggle for a new pictorial form, such as the Fauves were then developing, but rather a Nietzschean affirmation of life and a need for the free expression of emotion.

They chose the name "Brücke" because they considered themselves the "bridge" over which would flow to safety the surging revolutionary trends rising all over Germany.

In 1906—not 1905 as the "Chronik" states—the group was augmented by the Swiss painter Cuno Amiet, who had been in Paris and lived and painted at Pont-Aven. In his own work he brought to Dresden the Gauguin symbolism of rich flat color areas with a vital arabesque line. Emil Nolde joined the group in the same year. He was the oldest and has often been considered the prototype of German Expressionism in his use of violent dissonant color, his abstraction for the sake of the greatest emotional impact, and a grotesque pessimism. A few other painters joined in the same year: Franz Nölken from Hamburg, Bohumil Kubišta from Prague, Axel Gallén-Kallela from Finland. These men remained relatively unimportant, but the affiliation of Max Pechstein the same year was of much greater consequence. His robust, voluptuous forms brought a new and different element into the original group. In 1908 the Dutch painter Kees van Dongen was asked to join "Brücke." His audacious painting was considered the Paris outpost of the new group. The last painter who was drawn into the circle, after its members had already moved to Berlin, was Otto Mueller. Mueller's sensitive asceticism, his dream-like, angular, virginal figures strike a great contrast to the turbulent emotion of so many other Expressionists and show the inclusive character of the group.



As Kirchner points out in his chronicle, the "Brücke" found inspiration in the medieval German woodcut, African and South-Sea sculpture (Kirchner discovered this in the ethnographic museum in Dresden, independent of Vlaminck's similar findings in Paris), Etruscan art, and many other primitive manifestations. The "Brücke" painters found prototypes of their own production in the primitive power of exotic art.

Expression was achieved in all artistic media: painting, etching, lithography, wood carving, batik technique, and perhaps most important: the woodcut. Here the inspiration came not only from the linear forceful German woodcut of the late middle ages, but also more directly from Gauguin and Munch, who had revived much of the abstract, symbolic power of the primitive woodcut, and from Félix Vallotton whose severe contrast of black and white derived from the Japanese woodcut.

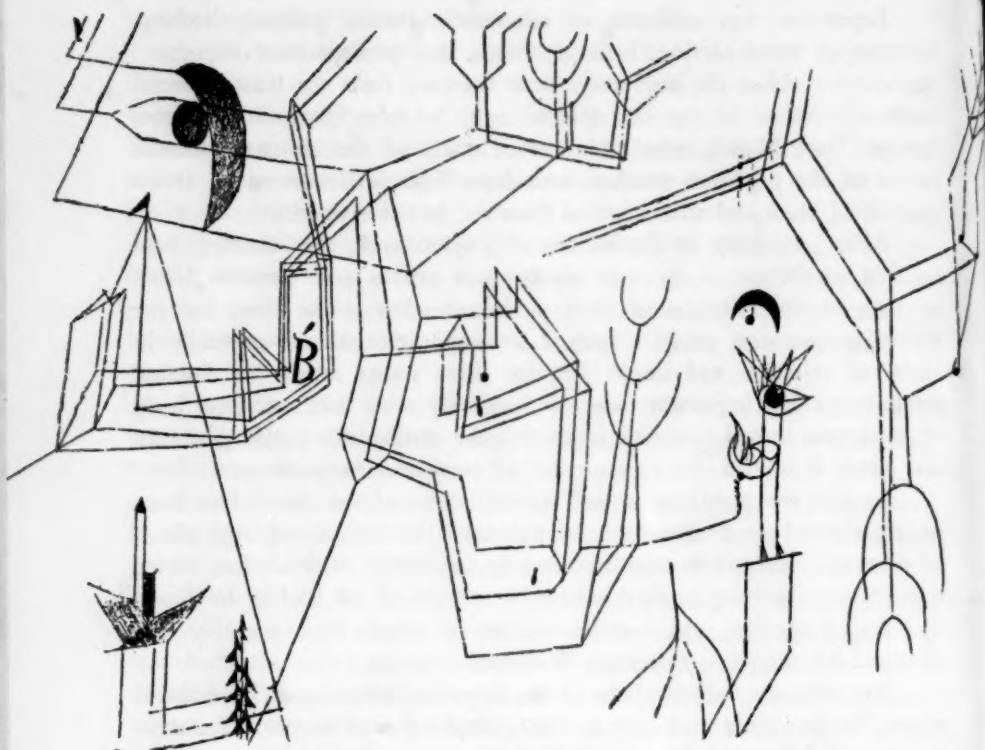
After publishing its first album of graphic work, the "Brücke" held its first exhibition in its own combination studio and common living quarters in 1906. It gained little public attention at the time, but the following year the public displayed a meager recognition—primarily in terms of rejection and insult. But for these young artists the finished product was less important than the creative process itself. A great body of work was turned out with frenzied speed during this period of storm and stress. It seemed like an exultation of creative self-expression.

At first the paintings as well as the prints of the closely-knit community showed great resemblance of style with the contrasts of large planes of pure and rather dark color animated by an abstract rhythmic line. There was a great similarity in their subjective concept of art leading to distortion and abstraction, and in subject-matter of objects from everyday life, endowed with mystic—sometimes daemonic—content.

But soon the individualities of the important artists manifested themselves. Nolde withdrew as early as 1907; Bleyl followed in 1909; Pechstein was expelled in 1912 because of disagreement as to exhibition policy.

About this time most of the members of the group moved to Berlin to be close to a center of artistic creation. When the remaining artists exhibited for the last time as a group in the *Sonderbund* exhibition in Cologne in 1912 they saw tendencies similar to their own blossoming forth all over Germany. The "Blaue Reiter" had been formed in Munich the previous year and went beyond even the "Brücke" with similar concepts. Kokoschka was represented with his visionary, highly spiritual portraits. There was no longer need for a small, segregated community of artists. The frontiers had been explored. The bridge had been thrown. The "Brücke" was dissolved the following year—1913—and the remain-

ing pre-war period was one of mutual inspiration among various individual artists all working toward similar ends in the effort to find adequate form for the subjective world of emotional experience of the artist. This time was to mark the high point of German Expressionism.



PAUL KLEE, DRAWING WITH A FERMATA, 1918, *Courtesy, Museum of Modern Art, New York.*

# CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS

## ART AND THE "PRIMARY PICTURE"

By Karl Knaths

**I**N MY work, whatever evocative substance a painting may contain, must arise through the understanding of how the pictorial elements are transformed into expressive qualities.

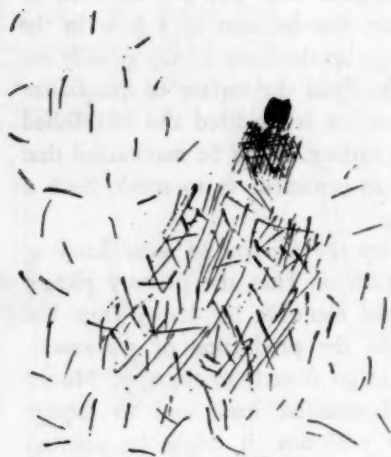
A dot in the center of a blank square is something more than the sum of these two elements. In this combination of a passive field and an active spot, a unit is created, a new element, which I like to call the "primary picture." The disparate characters of the original elements are caught up in a new entity and there is no positive and negative.

Various readings of this pattern are possible and constitute the difference between painting and construction. The dot can be seen as continuous with the surface. The dot can also be seen as a hole in the surface or it can be regarded as a wafer lying on the surface. Arp actually cut holes through the surface or pasted blocks upon the surface to materialize this possible deception. Even when the surface is rendered and established entirely in relations that are flat with the surface, it can be maintained that the pattern becomes an object in itself, an ornament so to speak. Such a procedure is constructivist and not painting.

Painting actually begins by calling up the illusion of some kind of space in depth by means of a surface pattern. Thus the primary picture can serve as a norm and all the pictorial elements be drawn from the nature of the surface. Thus, for example, the production of *movement*. Should there be only a dot, the eye would go directly to the spot. Moved from the center a certain unrest would manifest itself and so require counter adjustment. In certain off-center positions, it might be asserted that a balance can be maintained, as in a proportionate position where the major and minor areas are in accord or in border positions where the spot seems to grip the total emptiness and all becomes alive.

In the primary picture the eye goes directly to the spot, there being nothing to hamper this action. Klee has shown in his diagram "Gestaltung des schwarzen Pfeils" that the eye can also be led to the point from out of the uniformity of the total field. While this diagram indicates a more or less direct passage to the point, a more round-about way can also be elaborated. The preparing of certain tangles can be so arranged, and so

ensnare the interest with anticipation before the final denouement. The diagram is only one suggestion to show that a fundamental movement can be infinitely varied and adorned by such elaborations and embellishments. The pictorial sense of course lies in the resolution of these disturbed elements into a totality that just contains the surface, a final repose beyond the restful monotony of the blank canvas—beyond "the indentity of the indiscernible" as Joyce puts it. An experience has been lived through that has put itself beyond the reasoning and emotional powers. Through them an exaltation has been won. Beauty now is its intelligence.



KARL KNATHS, "Movement"



"RESOLVED MOVEMENT"

# letters to the editor

SIR:

May I question some of the statements made in the article *Material Culture, the Museum and Primitive Art* by Erna Gunther of the University of Washington, published in your issue of Spring 1950. In giving the history of the esthetic revaluation of primitive art she states, "... in recent years the artist has become more aware of the art forms of other cultures which are hidden in ethnological displays and some of these treasures are brought out of their old settings and displayed as art objects. ...

"African sculpture in the Colonial Exposition in Paris in 1927 led the way. ... In America the first large showing of primitive art was at the Golden Gate Exposition in 1939 when the Pacific Cultures exhibition included South Pacific, North Pacific Coast Indian and pre-Columbian Mexico and Peru; and The Bureau of Indian Arts and Crafts of the Department of the Interior under Mr. René d'Harnoncourt assembled a great show of American Indian art ... these exhibitions freed themselves from the older ethnological techniques of display and moved toward the 'quality' show of the art gallery.

"These shows were followed by the American Indian exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art ... and the Arts of the South Pacific. ..."

Miss Gunther then lists some other exhibitions: African Art at the de Young Museum, San Francisco, 1948; pre-Columbian show at Scripps College, 1950; Indian Art at Mills College, 1945; North Pacific Coast Indian Art at Portland, etc.

These exhibitions Miss Gunther describes as "introductory shows." Apparently Miss Gunther's experience and knowledge is largely confined to the last dozen years on the Pacific Coast. In America, the first large showing of "primitive" art *as art* was, I believe, the exhibition of Aztec, Incan and Mayan art held on the initiative and under the direction of Holger Cahill at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in the spring of 1933, including 233 very carefully chosen objects accompanied by an illustrated catalog and a scholarly introduction by Mr. Cahill.

Later in 1933 the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art courageously approved in principle a ten-year program of exhibitions in which the primitive arts were to be covered in five or six comprehensive exhibitions. This program was approved because it was evident at that time that museums in this country with ethnographical collections were little interested in the esthetic value of their material and that few museums of art were concerned with the field even in a marginal way. The Museum undertook this educational program of exhibitions and publications without, however, intending to build collections or take any permanent responsibility, trusting that in a few years other museums would carry on the work.

It is interesting to note that this first big show of pre-Columbian art was called *American Sources of Modern Art* because the Trustees felt that it would help explain and justify the Museum's occupying itself with an exhibition outside its field of modern art. In a deeper sense of course the Museum was justified for, contrary to what Miss Gunther believes, it is largely the modern artist who has extended the esthetic sensibilities of western man to include the arts of African, pre-Columbian American and Pacific cultures.

In the spring of 1935 the Museum of Modern Art put on its second show, the



exhibition, African Negro Art, directed by James Johnson Sweeney, with over 600 items selected with the most scrupulous esthetic standards from a score of museums, mostly European. This was followed in 1937 by the exhibition *Pre-historic Rock Pictures in Europe and Africa*, a large show of facsimiles from the Forschungsinstitut für Kulturmorphologie in Frankfurt. The exhibition *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*, 1940, included a large section devoted to masterpieces of pre-Columbian sculpture. The Museum had begun negotiations with Mr. d'Harnoncourt to organize an exhibition of American Indian art; circumstances of schedule and finance led to the postponement of this show until after the great exhibition in San Francisco. After the Indian Art show came the *Arts of the South Seas*, both shows magnificently directed by Mr. d'Harnoncourt.

I mention these Museum of Modern Art shows because I believe they represent the most carefully planned and long sustained effort anywhere in the world to present the primitive arts in special exhibitions. However, the Museum is not really a pioneer, nor is it true that the "African sculpture in the Colonial Exposition in Paris in 1927 led the way. . . ." (I suspect that Miss Gunther refers here not to the great *Exposition Coloniale* held in the 1930's, but to the show *L'Art des Colonies Françaises et du Congo Belge* at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1925.)

The pioneer show of African art was held many years before at the Folkwang Museum in Hagen, Germany in 1912. In 1914 Alfred Stieglitz put on the first American show of African art in New York at the "291" Gallery; and in 1916 at the Modern Gallery in New York a more extensive show was arranged by Marius de Zayas. Other early shows of African art, listed in Mr. Sweeney's *African Negro Art*, were held in Paris in 1919, at the Venice Biennale in 1921, at the Brummer Gallery, New York, in

1922 and at J. B. Neumann's New Art Circle in 1927.

So far as I know, the first special show of African Negro Art in an American museum was presented by the Brooklyn Museum in 1923. The Cleveland Museum held a similar show in 1929. Meanwhile, during the 1920s the great collection of African sculpture was being formed by the Barnes Foundation at Merion, Pennsylvania; and before 1930 Dr. Valentiner had arranged a permanent exhibition of African sculpture in the Detroit museum. The Newark and Brooklyn museums were also showing their ethnographical collections with awareness of their esthetic value.

I do not know when the first exhibition of pre-Columbian art was held: possibly the great show at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1928 was the first large demonstration. There were other shows of middle-American and Peruvian art at the Century Club in New York in 1931 and in Berlin Museums in 1932, but probably it is the Fogg Museum at Harvard that deserves the pioneer's laurels, for as early as 1927 it had devoted one of its galleries to Mayan art lent by the nearby Peabody Museum.

The collectors Level, Guillaume and Clouzot put on what may be the first exhibition of Oceanic art at the Galerie Devambez, Paris, in 1919. I recall seeing a large show of American Indian art in New York about 1930.

I think Miss Gunther is also mistaken about the relative roles of the anthropologist and the artist in the great revaluation of the primitive arts which has occurred over the past 50 years. African sculpture seems not to have been "discovered" by anthropologists and museums but by artists in Paris junk shops, specifically Matisse, Vlaminck, Derain and Picasso in Paris about 1905. A little later they seem to have studied the objects in the Trocadéro. About the same time German artists such as Kirchner were discovering African and Oceanic art

in ethnographic museums, particularly in Dresden. In America too it was artists who led the way, notably Max Weber, who returned to New York from Paris in 1910.

It is worth noting, briefly, the two great waves of discovery; the first wave might be called cubist-expressionist. This was concerned primarily with formal, plastic and emotional values of the most direct kind. The second wave, quasi-surrealist, was more preoccupied with the fantastic and imaginative values of primitive art. A valuable account of these discoveries and revaluations is to be found in Robert Goldwater's *Primitivism in Modern Painting*.

Yours very truly,  
ALFRED H. BARR, JR.  
*The Museum of  
Modern Art*

DEAR SIR:

While one can countenance certain stories, probably myths, that have grown up around certain periods in the life of Vincent van Gogh, because we have little or no authoritative records to prove or disprove them: it is a different matter when known source material is completely disregarded and new mythical theories started. Dr. Schneider did this in his article on Van Gogh in your Spring 1950 issue.

The Doctor starts right off by implying that *Dear Theo* is the artist's correspondence with his brother. In a sense it is, but it is an abridgment of the three volumes which these letters originally filled. Not only an abridgment but a

rearrangement, for clauses in widely separated sentences on the same topic in the original are combined in *Dear Theo*, with the result that Vincent's unique style is quite lost, and, often indeed, his real meaning. Surely a psycho-analyst would wish the full details if he were to analyze a patient, not partial disclosures!

But when Dr. Schneider asks why van Gogh never painted a nude, and then proceeds on the assumption that he didn't to psycho-analyze the artist, the Doctor not only shows his ignorance of van Gogh's work but causes his whole article to become absurd and meaningless. Van Gogh did paint nudes whenever he could find a model to pose for him, which was seldom; but in his Paris period he painted the following:

Title	Hyperion No.	De La Faille No.
Reclining Nude*	111	329
Reclining Nude	235	330
Reclining Nude (rear view)	236	328

\* (Exhibited in the Museum of Modern Art van Gogh show 1935-36; a decided nude study, even to the pubic hair!)

And while, as the Doctor states, the *Pieta* does show a half-naked Christ; this isn't the only example of such a half-clad figure—there is the painting after *The Good Samaritan*.

Yours faithfully,  
Eduard Buckman

Richmond, Virginia

ERRATUM. In the financial statement published in the Summer issue of the Journal, the expenditure for the Art Bulletin Index should have read \$1,531.78 instead of \$6,383.24.

# obituaries

## PAUL ROLLAND (1896-1949)

When Paul Rolland died at his home in Antwerp on October 1, 1949, Belgium lost a good citizen, the world of science and scholarship a leading mind, and untold numbers of American students an endearing teacher. Those who have studied art history in Belgium under the auspices of the Belgian-American Educational Foundation recall him as an inspiring force of the *Cours Universitaires de Vacances*.

Although he had lived long at Antwerp, Tournai was the city in which he was born in 1896, and from there he never departed in spirit. World War I interfered with his formal higher studies, but he had already been influenced by Soil de Moriamé, Canon Warichez and Hocquet, and led to investigate the past history of his native city. Thus he prepared himself for the profession of archivist and historian. He soon received many honors in these fields, including a doctoral degree with distinction in 1923; his dissertation, *Les origines d'une grande commune française: Tournai*, was praised and cited for its quality by Professor Pirenne in his seminar at Ghent.

Paul Rolland was known best in his own country for the results of his work as *archiviste-paléographe* and later conservator of Tournai, contributing the findings of his early research to the *Revue du Nord* and the *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*. In 1933, the Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles-Lettres of Paris awarded a prize to his doctoral thesis, just published.

Subsequently, perhaps because of his residence in Antwerp, Rolland was led toward archaeology and art history, the field with which his American pupils usually associate him. He was elected a member and later (1926) Secretary-General of the Académie Royale d'Archéologie de Belgique. Its publication, now called the *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, became known as "his Review" and the enormous task of editing such a periodical was done with loving attention and critical discernment. With these same talents he collaborated in *Ars Belgica* and *l'Art en Belgique*.

To Paul Rolland Belgium owes, too, the early steps taken in 1939 to safeguard her artistic patrimony. The later destruction of Tournai struck him hard, almost as a personal blow, but he worked to redeem in part the disastrous losses by preserving and restoring where possible, and through archaeological studies in bombed areas. We may recall here his discoveries in the churches of St.-Brice and St.-Quentin. His last significant act was to open the Congrès de la Fédération Archéologique et Historique on September 4, 1949.

By this brief note permit me to honor the memory of an inspiring teacher, Professor at Antwerp and Tournai, and to express, even if insufficiently, the gratitude many of us owe to him as a friend, instructor and counsellor, and the homage as a scholar and colleague.

CHARLES P. PARKHURST  
Oberlin College

# news reports

## NOTES

Prof. Robert Goldwater of Queens College, editor of the *Magazine of Art*, has received a leave of absence to accept a Fulbright scholarship for France. He will work on the subject of symbolism in art at the end of the 19th century. During his absence, James T. Soby will be acting editor of the *Magazine of Art*. Lloyd Goodrich, chairman of the editorial board of the magazine has resigned in order to devote full time to the Whitney Museum which is preparing a new building. He had been succeeded by Henry Hope.

Robert MacPhail has joined the Craft Service Department of Handy and Harman as educational director; Helen Fauver has been named executive director and Margret Craver remains as consulting silversmith.

Leon Morgenstern, a graduate assistant at the University of Illinois, has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study painting in France for the academic year of 1950.

Milton Horn, 849 E. 55th St., Chicago 15, Ill., is now at work on a large high relief for a new synagogue in River Forest. He is also doing six reliefs for the new medical buildings at the University of Pennsylvania.

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS.** Two additions to the art staff are: John G. Bergschneider, from Nantucket, who will have charge of the sculpture studio which is being organized this year; and August L. Freundlich, who has been appointed instructor in art education.

**ARTISTS GUILD SCHOOL OF ART.** Walter A. Dienhart, now sole owner

and director of the Artists Guild School of Art, Venice, Fla., has announced the opening of the fall session on Oct. 2. Information may be obtained from the Registrar.

**ART STUDENTS LEAGUE OF NEW YORK.** Members and associates of the League participated in the Diamond Jubilee Exhibition of Fine Arts, held at the National Academy of Design Galleries from Oct. 8th through Oct. 29th, commemorating the founding of the League in 1875.

Walter Pach is presenting a series of 10 lectures on the "Evolution in American Art" on Thursdays at 8 p.m. in the League Gallery, beginning on Oct. 5th.

**BETHANY COLLEGE.** Charles B. Rogers, head of the art department, exhibited 36 prints at the Smithsonian Institution during September.

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.** In the absence of the Chairman, Stephen C. Pepper, who is on sabbatical leave in Europe, Walter Horn is Acting Chairman of the Department. Professor Horn, a reserve officer alerted for active duty, has been deferred for the time being.

Felix Ruvolo, New York artist, and Karl Kasten, formerly of the art department of San Francisco State College, have joined the art faculty.

**CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF ART.** An exhibition of "Recent Scholarship Winners" was held in the gallery of the Cleveland Art Institute during the month of October. Included in the show were paintings by students who have won Gund and Page scholarships for travel and study during the past four years: Roger Anliker, instructor in Art at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and now holding a one-man show in New York; Emma Yarlekovich, formerly instructor at the University of Georgia; Leonard W. Zamiska, instructor in the Fine Arts Department of the University of Illinois; Joseph McCullough, grad-

uate assistant at Yale University; Ellen Ochi, recently returned from a two years' stay in France; Joan Kemp Smith, now living in Paris; Joseph Jankowski, Associate Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Alabama; Nick Voglein, Commercial Artist with Fawn Art Studios, Cleveland.

The exhibition offered an interesting insight into the effectiveness of an annual expenditure of over \$13,000 by the Institute's benefactors for scholarships and cash prizes to its students.

**CORNELL UNIVERSITY.** At the fourth annual Festival of Contemporary Arts held April 22-May 1, 1950, 15 painters were invited to exhibit. Included were Janice Bialla, Hyman Bloom, Cameron Booth, Otis Dozier, Joseph Floch, Kahlil Gibran, Joseph Glasco, Balcomb Greene, William Kienbusch, Leonid, Samuel Rosenberg, Felix Ruvolo, Kay Sage, Karl Schrag, and Walter Stuempfig. During the Festival, J. LeRoy Davidson, Yale University, spoke on "Art, Propaganda, and Politics: The State Department's Art Program."

Members of the staff in Painting and Sculpture, College of Architecture, exhibited in a number of galleries during the year. J. M. Hanson held his 5th one-man show at the Passedoit Gallery in January; in May the Museum of Modern Art announced the purchase of his oil, *Nocturnal Encounters*, for its permanent collection. Norman Daly held a one-man show at Bertha Schaefer Galleries in February. Both Hanson and Daly were represented in the Carnegie annual, 1949; Daly's paintings were also invited to the 1950 Pennsylvania Academy annual and the University of Illinois annual in March. John Hartell was represented in the 1950 Whitney Museum watercolor exhibition. Kenneth Evett's painting, *Night Flares*, was exhibited in 10 southern museums and has been purchased by the Clearwater (Fla.) Art Museum. *Cycle*, James L. Steg's color etching, was awarded the Lee purchase prize by the Print Club of Philadelphia in April.

John Hartell, chairman, was a member of the jury of selection at the 13th annual exhibition in February at Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica. Kenneth Washburn was superintendent of the 1950 exhibition of paintings at the New York State Fair, Syracuse.

James O. Mahoney, on sabbatic leave, has been traveling and painting in France, Italy and North Africa.

Visiting architectural design critics in the College of Architecture during the spring term, 1950, were Joseph N. Boaz, Oklahoma City; Philip C. Johnson, Museum of Modern Art; and Sanford Wells, New York.

**DAYTON ART INSTITUTE.** The Board of Directors of the Dayton Art Institute has announced the appointment of Miss Esther I. Seaver as director. Miss Seaver assumed the position on October 1st. Since 1946 Miss Seaver has been Educational Supervisor and Publicity Director of the Wadsworth Atheneum of Hartford, Conn.

**ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.** The recent VII Pan-American Congress of Architects in Havana awarded Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, director of the department of architecture, the Honor Medal for his design of classroom and laboratory buildings which have been built on the Institute campus. Konrad Wachsmann, head of shelter design of the Institute of Design, was given the Honor Medal for a construction system developed with Walter Gropius, head of the architecture department of Harvard University. The Institute of Design was given the highest award, a Silver Medal, in college and university competition for its program of educational study.

**THE JOHN HERRON ART INSTITUTE OF INDIANAPOLIS.** Mr. James W. Wicks, who graduated last June with the B.F.A. degree, has just been awarded a \$2,000.00 Tiffany Foundation prize for paintings executed in the last two years of his course at the John Herron Art School.



He was one of three artists to receive the top awards. His paintings have been included in several national exhibitions, and last spring he won the first prize in the Indiana Artists' Exhibition at the Herron Museum.

Mr. Willard E. Lamm, another graduate of last June, received an appointment as instructor in drawing and painting at the Minneapolis School of Art and began teaching there this fall. Mr. Lamm was awarded one of our \$1,000.00 Mary Miliken Memorial traveling scholarships last June and spent the summer in travel abroad.

Mr. Richard Lyon, who maintained a studio at the National Arts Club in New York City until this fall, and who is well known as an illustrator for the *Saturday Evening Post* and other leading periodicals, has joined the faculty as instructor in commercial illustration.

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY.** Prof. Otto Brendel has received an extension of his award at the American School in Rome and plans to continue his work there on a history of Roman Art during the current academic year. He will return to Indiana in September 1951.

Theodore Bowie is visiting professor in history of art this year. He was formerly in the French Department at Hamilton College and has devoted much research to the relationship between art and literature in 19th century France.

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA.** Howard Warshaw, formerly of Jefferson (Calif.) College, has been appointed assistant professor of drawing and painting. Claude Marks, assistant professor of art history, has resigned to return to England. John Rosenfield has been drafted into service.

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.** A three-week's program on the arts and their interrelations, organized as a course entitled "Contemporary Arts and Society" under the direction of the College of Architecture and Design, English and Fine Arts in the College of

Literature, Science and Art, and the School of Music, was held from July 3 through July 21, 1950.

Formal lectures on art, poetry and music were given each week by guest lecturers. Edward Warder Rannells (Kentucky) presented two papers on the visual arts, "Form and Content" and "Form and Function." John Ciardi (Harvard) spoke on "The Metaphorical Sense" and on "Thematic Poetry." Ross Lee Finney (Michigan) presented the music of Hindemith's "Matthias the Painter," inspired by panels from the Isenheim Altar of Grunewald, and "Music Moves Through Time." All three took a positive stand on the validity of contemporary forms; and in their third papers, they argued the value of the arts in society.

In addition to the formal addresses each week by the guest lecturers, panel discussions, with Charles Stevenson (Michigan) as moderator, were held. Other guests who participated in the panels were Frederick Wight (Boston Institute of Contemporary Art), Henry Aiken (Harvard) aesthetics; Carl Maas (consultant for Standard Oil Company of New Jersey) public relations; Curt Sachs (New York University) musicology. There were special lectures, notably the one on "The Art of Edvard Munch" by Frederick Wight; exhibitions of "Contemporary Visual Arts" arranged by Emil Weddige, "Post War American Painting" arranged by Frederic Wight, "Modern Masters of Graphic Art" installed by Jean Paul Slusser; chamber music by the Stanley Quartet; a piano recital by Willard MacGregor, a "Composers Forum" directed by Ross Finney; a Poetry Reading by John Ciardi, two plays, "Antigone and the Tyrant" and "The Time of Your Life" presented by the Department of Speech; two art movies, "The Titan" and the "Louisiana Story," under the auspices of the Art Cinema League—a student organization.

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA.** John Rood, associate professor of art, is

the author of *Sculpture in Wood*, published in September by the University of Minnesota Press. The sculpture process is described in detail, with information on how to set up a workshop, how to select and care for tools, the qualities of various woods and how to finish them, and a list of stores dealing in sculptors' supplies. The book is profusely illustrated.

An extensive art collection, assembled during the lifetime of the late George P. Tweed, is being given the University of Minnesota by Mrs. Tweed, who is also presenting to the University, as an endowment for this memorial, the Tweed home in Duluth and the city lot on which it stands. The most important single painting in the collection is *The Diggers* by Jean François Millet. Also included are Charles Daubigny's *French Coast Scene* and Theodore Rousseau's *November*. The collection is also notable for its European and early American portraits and for works by Inness, Homer, Twachtman and Hassam. Housed currently in the Tweed residence in Duluth, the collection will remain there until space can be found for it either in an especially-built gallery or in one of the new buildings to be constructed on the University's Duluth campus.

**MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE.** An exhibition showing the connection between music and visual arts opened Oct. 23 to mark the 50th anniversary of Dwight Art Memorial Building. The exhibit, arranged by Henry Rox, has been entitled "The Eye Listens," after Paul Claudel's recently published book.

A feature of the anniversary celebration was a forum on "The Interrelationship of the Arts," Nov. 11. Moderator was Bartlett Hayes, director of the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover. Invited speakers included Curt Sachs, professor of music at N.Y.U.; Wilhelm R. W. Koehler, professor of fine arts at Harvard; W. H. Auden, visiting lecturer at Mount Holyoke; and Roswell Gray Ham, president of Mount Holyoke.

An illustrated catalogue of this exhibit has been prepared and will be sent to interested institutions and individuals.

Associate Professor Henry Rox received the "Silvermine Guild of Artists Award" for sculpture in August. During the past year, his work was acquired by John Herron Institute, Indianapolis, John Carpenter Library, Dartmouth College, and Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza, Italy.

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA.** Dwight Kirsch, director of the University's Museum, has taken a year's leave of absence, to serve as interim Director of the Des Moines Art Center.

Miriam McGrew, former instructor in art education, has accepted a position on the art staff at Pennsylvania State College.

LeRoy Burket has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for study in France this year.

**INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.** New positions obtained by graduate students—Harriet D. Adams, Director, Junior Art Gallery, Louisville, Ky.; Eva Ingersoll Gatling, Curator of the Museum of Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hill, Mich.; J. Edward Kidder, Instructor, Washington University, St. Louis; Edgar Thorne, Instructor, Florida State University, at Tallahassee; John H. B. Knowlton, Visiting Lecturer, Michigan State College, East Lansing; Sibilla Skidelsky Symeonides, Instructor, Finch Junior College, N.Y.; Esther S. Sperry, Educational Curator, Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Theodore Turner, Instructor, Dartmouth; Winston Weisman, Instructor, University of Texas; Prudence Myer, Instructor in Oriental Art, Wellesley; Mrs. Milton Hepner (Doris Brian), Managing Editor, *The Art Digest*; Kenneth Donahue, Lecturer, The Frick Collection, N.Y.; Harry S. Hilberry, Research Assistant, Cluny Project, Council of the Mediaeval Academy of America; Mabeth Perrins, Lecturer, Honolulu Academy of Arts;

Patricia Cowles, Assistant, Department of Education, Walters Art Gallery; Gerald Bernstein, Assistant Curator of Art, Staten Island Museum; Eleanor Smith, Assistant Textile Study Room, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Margaret Jennings, Assistant, Department of Architecture and Design, Museum of Modern Art.

**COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.** Forty courses in fine and applied arts are being offered to the general public this Fall by the Extension Division of the City College School of General Studies.

**PACE COLLEGE.** Peter Fingesten, sculptor, has been engaged as art instructor. For the last five years, Mr. Fingesten has been on the art staff at Manhattan College.

**POMONA COLLEGE.** Joining the staff this fall are Dr. Alois J. Schardt, visiting professor of art who will teach two courses, art history and art theory, and James E. Grant who will instruct in design and drawing. Dr. Schardt has been affiliated with the art departments of U.C.L.A. and U.S.C.

**SIENA HEIGHTS COLLEGE.** William Boyham of the Boston Museum Art School will occupy Studio Angelico on its campus. Melville Steinfeld, who has been artist-in-residence for five years, has returned to his home studio in Park Ridge, Ill.

**WELLESLEY COLLEGE.** Sydney J. Freedberg has returned, after a year abroad as Guggenheim Fellow and Wellesley Faculty Fellow, to resume teaching. Hyman Bloom has been reappointed as instructor in painting. John McAndrew, in addition to his Wellesley duties, will be teaching the sole course in the history of art offered at MIT.

In the department's Fransworth Art Museum, the past year's purchases include a fine Lehmbruck bust, a Cezanne

water-color, and a large *Last Supper* by the 16th century Venetian, Schiavone.

**UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING.** Robert Russin, Associate Professor, is completing the second of six commissioned bas-reliefs for the university. This one is for the Education Building; the first completed bas-relief was for the cafeteria entrance. Four others, for the Agriculture building, are in the process of being carved. All of these are done in direct carving on the buildings.

**YALE UNIVERSITY.** A new Department of Design has been established at Yale. This department will administer a revised professional curriculum in paintings, sculpture and the graphic arts. It will be a four-year course, leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and will be closely allied with present courses of study of the Department of Architecture and the Department of Drama.

Josef Albers, who has been appointed Professor of Art and chairman of the new department, was until recently head of the Department of Art at Black Mountain College. He taught at the summer session of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard.

Robert G. Scott, Associate Professor of Art at Tulane University, has also joined the art faculty. He has taught at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, at the University of Texas and at Sophie Newcomb College.

**CORCORAN.** Hermann Warner Williams, Jr., Director, has announced that the "Twenty-Second Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Oil Paintings" will open March 31 and close May 13, 1951. Further information may be obtained from the Gallery.

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART.** A large exhibition of 20th-century painting and sculpture from this country and abroad occupied the entire 3rd floor for six weeks, ending October 15th. More than 100 prints made by 51 younger

American photographers and recently acquired by the Museum were exhibited during August and September. The recently acquired works by 15 artists will continue to be viewed on the first floor until November 6.

An exhibition, which is being organized by the Museum, called "Design for Use, U.S.A." will tour the principal cities of Europe and Great Britain. Its first stop is scheduled for early next year at the Landesgewerbemuseum in Stuttgart, which originally requested it. The exhibition will contain some 500 items including furniture, fabrics, lamps, pottery, glassware, flatware, floor covers, luggage, decorative and personal accessories.

**NEWARK ART LIBRARY.** A representative exhibit of original drawings, engravings and lithographs by Peter Maverick and other members of his family was opened September 6, 1950 in the Art Gallery of the Art Library, 43 Washington Street, Newark, N.J. The occasion was the publication of Stephen DeWitt Stephens' book, *The Mavericks*, issued by the Rutgers University Press at the end of August. The Art Library has purchased for its collection two family scrapbooks containing many interesting prints made by the daughters as well as some original drawings by a son-in-law, William Henry Townsend, which adds to the already large collection of Maverick material available in this Library.

**PORTLAND ART MUSEUM.** Forty-two special exhibitions will be presented at the Museum during the 1950-51 season. Thirty-eight of these will be assembled at the Museum itself; four are travelling shows brought to Portland as part of a circuit. Focus of the exhibition season will be two major shows which the Museum staff prepared for exhibition here and for subsequent travel to other museums throughout the country. These are the retrospective exhibition of the sculpture of Jacques Lipchitz, which opened in October, and the C. S. Price

Memorial Exhibition, which will open in March.

**WALTERS ART GALLERY:** "Communication and Transportation in the Ancient World," an exhibition primarily for children of the fourth-sixth grades was held during September.

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART:** The 1950 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting will open November 10th.

#### **C.A.A. ANNUAL MEETING IN WASHINGTON**

According to Henry Hope, President of the College Art Association, plans are going ahead for the annual meeting of the College Art Association to be held in Washington, D.C., Jan. 29, 30 and 31, 1951, with the Hotel Statler as headquarters.

Program chairmen include: Medieval, Perry Colt, National Gallery, Washington; Renaissance, Charles Seymour, Jr., Yale; Oriental, John Thacher, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington; American, John Baur, Brooklyn Museum; Modern, S. Lane Faison, Jr., Williams College.

#### **AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR AESTHETICS MEETS**

The American Society for Aesthetics held its seventh annual meeting October 19, 20 and 21, 1950, at Duke University. Dr. Katherine Gilbert, Past President, was hostess.

Thursday evening, William D. Bullock lectured on "The Music of the Spheres." At the First Session, "The Knowledge Component in Aesthetic Judgment (Auditory Arts)," which met Friday morning, Craig LaDriere (Catholic University) was chairman. Speakers were: George Beiswanger (Georgia State College for Women)—"Tempo as Cognized Character"; Gordon Sutherland (Miami University, Oxford, Ohio)—"On Knowledge as an Element in the Experience of Music"; Isabel C. Hungerland (University of California); Paul

Welsh (Duke University)—"The Problem of the Interpretation of Literature."

The Second Session, "The Knowledge Component in Aesthetic Judgment (Visual Arts)," with Thomas Munro (Cleveland Museum of Art) as chairman, presented the following: Edwin Blake (Mt. Kisco, New York)—"Geometric and Transgeometric Composition"; Creighton Gilbert (University of Louisville)—"Degas' Classicism and Realism: the Fact and the Value"; and Lester Longman (University of Iowa)—"Vision and Form."

The Saturday program included: Third Session, "The Social Importance of Education in the Arts," with Dr. Gilbert as chairman, and speakers Henry L. Kamp-hoefner (North Carolina State College, School of Design, Raleigh), Paul Green (Chapel Hill), Carleton Sprague Smith (Music Division, New York Public Library) and Walter A. Taylor (American Institute of Architects). Fourth Session, "Method and Experiment in Aesthetics," with Glen Haydon (University of North Carolina) as chairman and speakers Adeline McCall (Chapel Hill)—"Painting and Body-Movement in Musical Creativity," Weller Embler (Cooper Union)—"Studies in Creative Activity in the Modern World," and Kathi Meyer-Baer (New Rochelle, N.Y.)—"Illustration in Art Text-Books." Following these sessions, tea and informal discussions were held at the homes of Duke Faculty members: "The Aesthetic Element in Courses in Literature," Craig LaDriere, chairman, at the residence of Dean Florence Brinkley; "The Aesthetic Element in Courses in Music," Carroll Pratt (Princeton), chairman, at the residence of Prof. Karl Zener; "The Aesthetic Element in Courses in the Visual Arts," Helmut Hungerland (Piedmont, Calif.), chairman, at the residence of Prof. Earl Mueller; and "The Aesthetic Element in Courses in Philosophy," John R. Tuttle (Elmira College), chairman, at the residence of Prof. Katherine Gilbert.

A lecture-recital by Carlton Sprague Smith, "The Flute—Gentleman's Instrument," was the concluding event of the

meeting. The Museum of Modern Art's show entitled *Sculpture by Painters* was exhibited in the Woman's College Library during the meeting.

## PHILADELPHIA JUBILEE SYMPOSIUM

In celebration of its 75th Anniversary the Philadelphia Museum of Art has announced a symposium on Art to be held in cooperation with the American Philosophical Society at the Hall of the Society, Independence Square on Jan. 26 and 27, 1951. Among those participating in the program are Richard Offner, Sir Kenneth Clark, William Bell Dinsmoor, Ludwig Heydenreich, Henry Allen Moe, Henri Marceau, Jacques Lipchitz, J. B. Neumann, Edward G. Robinson, Lord Crawford and Balcarres, David E. Finley, Francis Henry Taylor, and Philip Hendy.

## SYMPOSIUM ON THE ARTIST IN AMERICAN HISTORY

The National Capital Sesquicentennial Commission and The Corcoran Gallery of Art sponsored a Symposium on the Artist in American History, October 27 and 28, held in conjunction with the exhibition "American Processional, The Story of a Nation and Its People, 1492-1900," which opened last July.

The Friday program included: Opening remarks, Hermann Warner Williams, Jr.; Survey of the Exhibition, Elizabeth McCausland; Showing of the "Panorama of the Sioux War," painted by John Stevens, with text to accompany the panorama; and reception in the special exhibition galleries.

Saturday morning, Lloyd Goodrich of The Whitney Museum of American Art, Edgar Preston Richardson, Detroit Institute of Arts, and Henry Steele Commanger, Columbia University, spoke on "The Artist in American History." In the afternoon, the panel discussed "The Artist in American History." Edward Boykin, Former Director, Historical and Cultural Activities, The National Capital Sesquicentennial Commission, was chairman of the panel; Holger Cahill was



moderator. Members of the Panel were John I. H. Baur, Charles Edward Buckley, Henry Steele Commager, Lloyd Goodrich, George C. Groce, Magill James, Elizabeth McCausland, Edgar Preston Richardson, Eleanor B. Swenson and Hermann Warner Williams, Jr.

#### REPORT ON UNESCO REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The following is a resume of the majority and minority opinions expressed at the UNESCO regional conference on *Freedom of the Artist*, held at the San Francisco Museum of Art on March 31 and attended by 200 artists.

**Economics:** It was the majority opinion that private support for the artist is possible, but since it is not generally given that Federal aid should be granted, both in the form of subsidies and through a Federal department of fine arts, and that this aid should be free of political control.

**Education:** It was strongly emphasized that there exists a great need for more and better art education in the public schools; and that creative artists should be more widely used as teachers and for better teacher training in art. In addition certain recommendations were made that: audio-visual aids be used in schools, lending libraries of prints be established, more art movies be available to the public, more and better press coverage be sought, community art centers and workshops be created to counteract the centralization of art in museums and in large cities, color television on subjects be encouraged.

**Freedom:** The general feeling was expressed that the government's attitude toward art is negative and that public officials need education as to its value. The majority considered that an artist cannot be termed "free" if he is economically insecure. Several mentioned the State Department withdrawal of the American show from Europe as an example of lack of government understanding of art. Several persons mis-

trusted the public because of the usual cultural lag in public opinion. It was generally conceded that in this industrial society most artists are free to earn a living at other professions but cannot live by their profession of fine art.

**Aesthetics:** The majority thought that competition between varied aesthetic theories is a sign of creative vitality. Most artists felt that this does not make it impossible for artists to work together for their common good, that they *can* act in cooperation with one another in spite of their different points of view and styles.

It was thought that art actually plays a minor role in the life of the American people because of insufficient or no art education, lack of good art in competitive magazine advertising and other factors. Museums and galleries are not sustaining current American art. A vital interest in art could be aroused by better coverage of press, radio and periodicals.

**UNESCO:** It was recommended that the Visual Arts Program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization should promote exchange shows between countries; mural competitions; multiple exhibits of color transparencies; the use of fine artists in design of U.S. Stamps; a mural competition for the United Nations building; the creation of a U.S. Department of Fine Arts and public subsidy to artists.

It was the majority's opinion that world understanding could be substantially aided by the creative artists.

A transcript of the tape recording made at the Conference has been forwarded to the National Commission on UNESCO. This transcript, as well as the reports submitted at the Conference are available to anyone interested, at the San Francisco Museum. Copies of the report on the questionnaire sent out to artists in the Bay Area are available to all (while they last).

This report was prepared by Emmy Lou Packard, Edith Heath, Lois Langhorst, Ralph DuCasse Byron Randall,

Marion Cotton and Karl Kasten, Board of Directors, Artists Groups of Bay Area Associated.

## UNESCO "ARTS AND EDUCATION"

*Arts and Education*, No. II, Dec. 1949 (UNESCO Publication No. 652) contains a detailed report of the Meeting of Experts for the Arts in General Education, arranged at UNESCO House in Paris from Nov. 7 to 10, 1949.

Other contents of this issue include: "Creative Art in Egyptian Schools" by Habib Gorgi, "The Child Sculptors of Koubbah Gardens" by Ruth Gage-Colby, "Art in Factories—A Norwegian Experiment (based on a report by Harry Fett)", "Three International Methods of Education through Art," notes, news, bibliography, etc.

This publication may be obtained in the United States from the Columbia University Press, 2960 Broadway, New York 27, N.Y. for 20 cents.

## PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ARTISTS IN 1952

At the meeting in April of the Visual Arts Panel of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO in Washington, it was recommended by Mrs. Henry Potter Russell, President of the Woman's Board of the San Francisco Museum and Vice-Chairman of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, by Daniel Catton Rich, Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, and by L. M. C. Smith, President of the American Federation of Arts, to the National Commission and to UNESCO Relations, that the proposal by Artists' Equity of an International Conference of Artists in 1952, at the United Nations Building in New York, be supported, and be broadened to become an international conference of all creative artists (musicians and writers as well as painters and sculptors). If this proposed conference is realized, it will be an important step in bringing

the workers in the creative arts much more generally into UNESCO's programs.

The Visual Arts Panel has as chairman Daniel Catton Rich, member of the National Commission, and among other members are Ben Shahn and William Zorach, artists; Dorothy Liebes, weaver, Edward Steichen, photographer, Sam Lewisohn, art collector; Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum of Modern Art, member of the Program Committee of the National Commission; Grace Morley, Director of the San Francisco Museum of Art, and chairman of the American Federation of Arts' Committee on UNESCO, on which Equity is represented by its Director, Hudson Walker.

## INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Club at the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University, the Annual Symposium on the History of Art, presented by graduate students from Eastern Universities, was held on April 1, 1950.

The morning session included the following lecturers: John F. Haskins, Institute of Fine Arts, "The Northern Origins of Sassanian Metalwork"; John Pancoast, Yale, "Alberti's Treatise on Painting in Relation to Fifteenth Century Italian Painting"; Caroline Feudale, Institute of Fine Arts, "The Drawings of Michaelangelo's Youth"; Hugh Broadley, Institute of Fine Arts, "Titian and the Antique."

In the afternoon: Norman Wright, University of Pennsylvania, "The Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia"; Geraldine Pelles, Columbia, "Delacroix Reconsidered"; Corlette Rossiter, Bryn Mawr, "A basic Kinship between Ingres and Delacroix"; James W. Fowle, Harvard, "Sidelights on Gericault's Raft of the Medusa"; Lincoln F. Johnson, Harvard, "The Genesis of Toulouse-Lautrec's *Au Moulin Rouge*"; Robert Rosenblum, Yale, "The Relation of Cubist Space

to Cubist and Constructivist Sculpture"; and Robert F. Reiff, Columbia, "Constantin Brancusi."

Paul Perrot, Institute of Fine Arts, was chairman of the committee that arranged the 1950 Symposium. Plans are being entertained to hold a similar Symposium in the Spring of 1951. The exact date will be announced in the near future.

### CIRCULATING EXHIBITIONS AVAILABLE

The circulating exhibitions owned by the Delaware Art Center are prepared for use in public schools, community groups, private and parochial schools, clubs and civic organizations, both in and out of Delaware. These exhibitions contain original works of art, reproductions, objects of art and popular "educational exhibitions" organized around an educational theme. All material is prepared for easy display being either matted or mounted and is carefully documented. Much of the material has been compiled by members of the educational staff.

Write to the Art Center, Park Drive and Woodlawn Ave., Wilmington 51, Delaware, for listing of available exhibitions.

### MODERN ART ANNUAL

The *Modern Art Annual*, attempting to report factually about the American scene of contemporary art from Sept. 1949 to June 1950, will be available in November. Its contents will include: documents: articles, statements by artists, pictures and catalogue texts, bibliography of books on modern art, chronology of events, list of every exhibition by contemporary American artists, list of juries of major art competitions, scholarships and prizes, museum acquisitions, economics of modern art, art criticism, films on modern art, etc.

The *Modern Art Annual* numbers on its staff: Robert Motherwell, painter and editor of the "Documents of Modern Art," Ad Reinhardt, painter and assistant

professor of Art, Brooklyn College, Aaron Siskind, photographer and teacher, and Bernard Karpel, librarian of the Museum of Modern Art.

The *Modern Art Annual* will be published by Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc., 38 East 57th St., New York 22, N.Y. at an approximate price of \$2.50.

### CAN ART BE TAUGHT?

*Art News* has asked a group of noted art teachers to explain their individual thoughts on this question. In text and illustrations they will set forth their ideas and their own methods of teaching, in a series of articles starting with the October number of *Art News*.

Amadée Ozenfant, Ozenfant School of Fine Arts; Will Barnet, Art Students League; Hans Hofmann, Hofmann School of Fine Arts; Max Beckmann, Brooklyn Museum School of Art; Josef Albers, Yale School of Design, are among the many teachers whose methods and philosophies will be examined in this series.

### EBF TO GIVE SCHOOLS PAINTINGS

Encyclopaedia Britannica Films has acquired 40 paintings from the Encyclopaedia Britannica Collection of Contemporary American Paintings which will be exhibited and subsequently presented to American schools and universities in recognition of outstanding leadership in visual education. Starting this fall, the paintings will go on a three-year exhibition of educational institutions which have been invited to show this group, and each year arrangements will be made whereby selected educational organizations and institutions will be given one of the paintings for permanent retention on recommendations of professional leaders.

A forthcoming filmstrip on contemporary American painting, to be released in full color, will consist of five strips showing the 127 paintings from the Britannica Collection arranged in their relation to Romanticism, Realism, Mod-

ernism and the American scene, with an introductory filmstrip on art appreciation. Caption frames to describe the paintings and provide background information on contemporary art will be highlighted in the series.

#### NATIONAL PRINT EXHIBIT PLANNED AT MINNESOTA U.

The first national print exhibit to be sponsored by the University of Minnesota will open at the University gallery in Northrop Memorial auditorium Dec. 6 and continue through Jan. 19, 1951.

Purchase prizes totaling approximately \$600 are to be awarded by a jury composed of Mauricio Lasansky, University of Iowa; Dr. Dmitri Tselos, University of Minnesota; Richard Davis, curator, Minneapolis Institute of Arts; William Friedman, assistant director, Walker Art Center. H. Harvard Arnason, University of Minnesota, is ex-officio member of the jury.

A private collection of prints, loaned by Richard Davis, will be shown in the gallery at the time of the national print exhibition.

#### 1951-52 ROME PRIZE FELLOWSHIPS OFFERED

The American Academy in Rome is again offering a limited number of fellowships for mature students and artists capable of doing independent work in architecture, landscape architecture, musical composition, painting, sculpture, history of art and classical studies.

Fellowships will be awarded on evidence of ability and achievement, and are open to citizens of the United States for one year beginning Oct. 1, 1951, with a possibility of renewal. Research fellowships, offered in classical studies and art history, carry a stipend of \$2,500 a year and free residence at the Academy. All other fellowships carry a stipend of \$1,250 a year, transportation from New York to Rome and return, studio space, free residence at the Academy, and an additional allowance for European travel.

Applications and submissions of work, in the form prescribed, must be received at the Academy's New York office by Feb. 1, 1951. Request for details should be addressed to the Executive Secretary, American Academy in Rome, 101 Park Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.

#### NEW GALLERY FOR AFRICAN ART

The Segy Gallery, 708 Lexington Ave., New York City, was opened recently with its first exhibition of African Sculptures from Oct. 9th to Nov. 9th. The Segy Gallery, under the direction of Ladislav Segy, was established as the first gallery specializing in African sculptures. It will have on permanent exhibition the largest private collection of African art in America. The establishment of this collection was started about 25 years ago and part of it was exhibited in Paris in 1932 and later in Berlin and London.

Of special interest in the current exhibition is the collection of Benin bronzes dating back to the 16th-18th centuries; a large number of rare ivory carvings by the Warega and Basonge tribes and a number of unusual masks by the Bakuba and Bayaka tribes from the Belgian Congo; masks of great beauty by the Baoule tribe of the Ivory Coast and a great variety of ancestor and magical statues from different tribes of West African countries. The objects included in the present exhibition are genuine, authentic, antique sculptures used in ceremonials by the natives of Africa.

#### 1950 GUIDE TO ART FILMS

The new edition of the *Guide to Art Films*, compiled by Dorothy B. Gilbert and Helen M. Franc and published by the *Magazine of Art*, lists 353 American and foreign films on art—all that are currently available in the United States—with full particulars as to size, length, source, rates of rental and sale, etc. The subjects include analyses of individual works or studies of single artists; surveys of whole periods and civilizations

through their art; surveys of great art collections; "how-to-do-it" demonstrations of various techniques and media; films on handicrafts of many lands; films on art education for children and adults; and an increasing number of abstract, experimental films.

Orders for the *Magazine of Art's Guide To Art Films*, at 75 cents per copy (60 cents if remittance accompanies order) should be sent to The American Federation of Arts, 1262 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

### **I.N.P. DISTRIBUTORS OF NEW COLOR SLIDES**

International News Photos has completed a collection of color transparencies of the paintings, frescoes, sculptures, relics and other art treasures in the Vatican and in the famous Basilicas of Rome. More than 600 different colored photographs are included in the collection, each catalogued with historical data. The original transparencies are in 8 x 10 in. format, and they have also been reproduced in 35mm slides. These transparencies are now available and may be obtained from International News Photos, 235 East 45th St., New York 17, N.Y., exclusive distributors for this collection.

### **NEW CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED BOOKS AND PRINTS**

"Illustrated Books and Series of Prints," from the 15th to 20th centuries (Catalogue No. 20), has been published recently by Pierre Beres, Inc., 6 West 56th St., New York 19, N.Y.

### **M.M.A. SLIDES AVAILABLE**

The Museum of Modern Art has recently published several slide catalogs of unusual interest to the field of art education. One is a new series of color transparencies of paintings in the Museum Collection, *Color Slide List 50*, which includes many new acquisitions as well as old favorites. Each slide is an original transparency made directly from the painting. This series is available

in the 2x2" size only and mounted in cardboard at \$1.00 each.

Among the new black and white slides are *Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art*, a new listing of the Museum's Sculpture Collection; *Timeless Aspects of Modern Art*, a set based on the Museum's recent exhibition dealing with the relationship between modern art and art of past periods; *Modern Art in Your Life*, also based on a recent exhibition, which demonstrates that the appearance and shape of countless objects of everyday life are related to or derived from modern painting and sculpture. These black and white slides are available in both the standard or the 2x2" sizes at a cost of 75 cents each.

In addition to its own slides, the Museum is also distributing catalogs of four superb new sets of color slides made by Dr. Fred Block of Hollywood (See COLLEGE ART JOURNAL, Vol. 8, No. 2). *North American Indian Art* is the latest addition to Dr. Block's impressive series on the arts of primitive cultures. *Santos: Our Religious Folk Art* documents the religious art of the Spanish-American Southwest. *Modern Ceramic Arts* provides an extensive survey of contemporary pottery, and *Revelation of Beauty in Nature* is a colorful array of animals, minerals and natural formations. These slides must be ordered directly from Dr. Block.

All lists, including those of Dr. Block's slides, may be had by writing to the Museum of Modern Art Library, 11 West 53rd Street, New York 19, N.Y.

### **LATIN AMERICAN SLIDE PROJECT**

In response to an increasing public interest and a demand for teaching materials in the field of Latin American studies, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in cooperation with the American Council on Education sponsored a project, directed by Florence Arquin of Chicago, to select, identify and organize into documented subject



units such duplicates of color slides as might be assembled from existing collections within the United States. This limitation was deliberate as one of the objectives of the experiment was to determine sources for such materials in this country and to ascertain the nature and scope of these collections.

The film-slide in color was selected as the logical medium for this project because the use of the visual aid provided a direct means of reaching large audiences, promoted interest, assisted the instructor in associating new ideas with familiar ones and eliminated the obstacle of foreign languages. Also the element of color, indispensable to the portrayal of the total reality of things seen, stimulates an esthetic and emotional response.

The survey of sources undertaken in the development of this program revealed that relatively few of the large number of color slides then available had been taken with any specific objective. For the most part these photographs were of poorly selected unrelated subjects, leaned heavily on the quaint and the picturesque, and were of mediocre quality. Photographs of Mexico and Guatemala predominated.

Nevertheless, in the period between June 1944 and June 1945, a master file of 1,500 color slides culled from a variety of sources was finally selected. The choice of the 33 subjects represented in this collection was determined by available material of acceptable quality and importance. Even these sequences would not have been possible had it not been for the unique collections and generous cooperation of the University of Texas, the Museum of Modern Art, The Brooklyn Museum, the Chicago Historical Museum and the private files of Julian Bryan, Florence Arquin and others.

The American Council on Education in Washington undertook the sale of duplicate sets of these units for the five year period ending in June 1950. At the same time, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs presented a

duplicate set of the complete master file to each of eleven regional depositories in this country—the Southern California Council on Inter-American Affairs, Los Angeles; Film Center, University of Denver; American Republics Branch, U.S. Office of Education, Washington; Pan American Union, Washington; The Ryerson Library, The Art Institute of Chicago; Bureau of Visual Instruction, State University of Iowa; The Pan-American Society of Massachusetts, Boston; Bureau of Visual Instruction, University of North Carolina; Division of Education, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Visual Instruction Bureau, University of Texas. These agencies, since 1945, have been circulating units of this collection on a loan basis. Although the master file was neither as comprehensive nor as representative as might be desired, it was a beginning.

In October 1945, under a grant made by the Department of State, Miss Arquin was sent to South America for a period of six months to photograph, in color, subjects designed to meet the needs of scholars, teachers and a large portion of the public interested in the life and culture of Latin America.

Because of the time limit of the grant, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador were chosen as the countries to be visited, since they represent existing cultural patterns which stem from the three major cultural traditions of South America—the Portuguese, the Spanish and the indigenous Indian. Furthermore, the richness of their respective heritages and art treasures made possible the documentation of greatly varied subjects from Pre-Conquest, Colonial and Contemporary sources. The color slides resulting from this visit formed the nucleus of a permanent collection, the property of the Government of the United States.

It is recognized that this file is far from complete, even for the countries represented. It is hoped that it may one day be expanded, become much more comprehensive and include the equally important and significant materials of the

other Latin American Republics.

In June 1949, the Department of State allocated further funds so that a master file of selected color slides from the above mentioned photographs could be organized. With the advice and liberal assistance of specialists in the various fields of study included in this new collection, 2,982 photographs were documented, cataloged and arranged into 50 units. These sequences cover a wide range of subjects from Pre-Conquest Indian cultures to modern cities and each is accompanied by a short text giving pertinent data concerning the individual slides. A bibliography is included.

Through the offices of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to whom this collection has been entrusted for the next five years, duplicates of these Kodachrome slide sequences are now available for purchase at a cost of 50 cents per slide, mounted in the usual 2x2" cardboard frame. Particular attention has been paid to securing duplicates of high quality and fidelity. These sequences have been placed in the Book and Art Shop of the Museum where the materials may be viewed and where purchase orders may be placed.

The Department of State is sending a duplicate set of the complete collection to the cultural institutes of each of the four countries represented. It is planned that these units be used in conjunction with the cultural and educational activities of these centers.

Twenty-four sequences of slides (1,303 slides) from Brazil, 17 sequences (970 slides) from Peru, 6 sequences (357 slides) from Bolivia and 3 sequences (352 slides) from Ecuador have been completed to date on the subjects of cities, colonial churches, archaeology, Indian life, and public buildings.

#### CORONET ART FILM RELEASED

A new 16mm sound motion picture, *Art and Life in Italy*, was released by Coronet Films in October. In it the art of Italy is offered as part of the activities of the Italian people in the land in which they live. Classes stand on the street of Florence, before the "Gates of Paradise"; they go into the Arena Chapel to see Giotto's frescoes; they see the Grand Canal of Venice as it is today and as it appears in Italian painting; they see the works of Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli, della Robbia and see monuments such as the Arch of Titus, the Pantheon, and St. Peter's.

George T. Miller, Chief, Art Education, Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction served as Educational Collaborator during production of this motion picture. *Art and Life in Italy* is a one-reel film and is available in both black and white and full color. It may be obtained for rental from any leading 16mm film rental library or for purchase or preview through Coronet Films, Chicago 1, Ill.

# book reviews

ANDRÉ MALRAUX, *The Psychology of Art*, Vol. I: *Museum without Walls*, 156 pp., 86 ill. (21 in color); Vol. II: *The Creative Act*, 225 pp., 134 ill. (15 in color), The Bollingen Series, XXIV, New York: Pantheon Books, 1949. \$25.00.

Characteristic of French scholarship is a keen feeling for the values of the subject matter treated. No shadow of a conflict appears between disinterested historical or scientific study of art and an aesthetic interest in the object of the study. Actually, it is hard to conceive how very fruitful work in the study of art can be accomplished through any other attitude. No better evidence for the aesthetic values exists than the direct feeling of them. Yet there are schools of aesthetic scholarship which seem ashamed to admit of such a thing as if it might compromise the scholarship.

André Malraux's two volumes are a continuous and refreshing testimony of his love of art, and an understanding of his subject that is both intellectually and emotionally grounded. Not only the text but the illustrations show it. The result is that whatever may turn out to be one's final estimate of the validity of his theories, one can never reject his aesthetic observations and sensitive discriminations.

The volumes are not easy to read, they are so profusely suggestive, and the uninterrupted movement of thought runs so like a stream of consciousness. The sentences are a succession of apothegms. His writing reminds one a little of Emerson's in this respect. Again and again one is tempted to underline for future

quotation. Speaking of child art, for instance, he says: "A child often has a gift for art, he is not an artist. His gift controls him; not he his gift. He is incapable of keeping up over a series of drawings the standard set by one of them. . . . His activity is different in kind from the artist's. . . . He substitutes a miracle for craftsmanship." (I, p. 123). Thus Malraux swiftly analyzes a paradox that puzzles many of us.

These terse sentences make a good transition to his main thesis which can be crudely stated in these words: that great art is the discovery and development of a "style" and that the history of art is the history of these "styles." But by "style" Malraux means something quite special. It is a loaded term, the seed of his entire aesthetic.

A "style," he says, "is not a set of characteristics common to all works of a given school or period . . . rather it means the chief object of the artist's activity, whereof living forms are but the raw material." (I, p. 156.) A "style" is thus a cluster of values. Furthermore, the values are structural, active, and imposed upon the materials; they are not passive aspects of nature, even though discovered. And their origin is out of preceding "styles" of art by reaction against them or projection from them rather than from anything found in nature.

There is a reminiscence of Kant's aesthetics in his view. Apart from the activity of mind, nature is chaos. Order is imposed on nature by man's selective and evaluative activity. The statesman imposes order in human affairs by forms of society, the scientist by laws of nature, the artist by "styles." Not that any combination of activities will produce order. Only certain combinations form a stable cluster. The artist's genius and his creative act is the discovery of such a cluster and his gift to man is the order and the rational and emotional significance with which human affairs

become endowed by this activity.

But different from Kant, who conceived only one set of categories, Malraux describes many significant "styles," and a new "style" is needed for each new age. And yet we can be appreciative of the "styles" of ages not ordered like our own. In fact, the distinctive feature of "modern art" in the modern age is that for the first time in history, and largely through the invention of photography, we can envisage the "styles" of other ages and cultures than our own. This expanding album of photographs bringing together widely dispersed examples of a "style" so that by an intuitive induction the "style" stands forth—this is the "museum without walls." So, for the first time in history we have a "style" that is almost pure structure, since for the first time man has become self-conscious about his aesthetic activity. The artist today familiar with a hundred "styles" for the first time creates an aesthetic order and also knows he is creating it as a unique "style" of his own making. "Aided by the Imaginary Art Museum . . . modern art liberated painting, which is now triumphantly a law unto itself. . . . Did any previous age ever make bold to rank leading artists equal to the greatest masters?" (I, p. 154)

Here obviously is a rather original aesthetic hypothesis. It is not the simple cultural relativism of the anthropologists. It has a deeper significance and a wider understanding. It takes a greater risk. It incurs more errors than a less speculative theory, but probably comes nearer encompassing the true situation as regards the value of art.

The two volumes are printed with taste and profusely illustrated, both in half tone and color. They are books to read through and think about and pick up again and again.

STEPHEN C. PEPPER  
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LEONARDO DA VINCI, *Paragone: A Comparison of the Arts*, with an introduction and translation by Irma A. Richter, 109 pp., 12 pl., New York: Oxford University Press, 1949. \$5.50.

The enviable social position achieved by the artist of the later Renaissance, emancipated from the status of a craftsman and from the rules of the guilds, and in some cases elevated to equality with princes, received its initial impetus from the pioneer struggle of Leonardo da Vinci. His practical yet impassioned arguments for including painting as one of the liberal rather than the mechanical arts are contained in the so-called *Paragone*, the first chapter of MS Urbinas 1270 in the Vatican Library, apparently culled by Francesco Melzi from a number of original Leonardo manuscripts, mostly no longer extant. Miss Richter has performed a valuable service by the preparation of a separate edition of the *Paragone*. The paragraphs, in no sort of order in Urbinas 1270, have been arranged according to subject, provided with a clear and informative introduction, notes and commentary, and accompanied by an English translation. In this form the book deserves to be assigned as reading for courses in Renaissance art as well as cultural history, and ought to be a part of every undergraduate art library.

Leonardo argues that the essential dignity of painting resides in its character as a science, whose basis of apprehension is vision. The superiority of the eye over all other sense organs put together he considers self-evident. It is "preferable to lose the senses of hearing, smell, and touch rather than the sense of sight, because whoso loses his eyesight is deprived of vision and of the beauty of the universe and may be likened to one buried alive in a grave where he can move and subsist. Now do you not see that the eye embraces the beauty of the whole world? It is the lord of astronomy and the maker of cosmography; it counsels and corrects all the arts of mankind;

it leads men to the different parts of the world; it is the prince of mathematics, and the sciences founded on it are absolutely certain. It has measured the distances and sizes of the stars; it has given birth to architecture, and to perspective, and to the divine art of painting. . . . The eye is the window of the human body through which it feels its way and enjoys the beauty of the world."

Poetry is inferior to painting, as it represents not the visible world, the creation of God, but mere words, which are works of man. It suffers a further disadvantage in not being able to present its subject as a whole, but only piecemeal. Proof lies in the fact that people travel for hundreds of miles to worship before a picture, but not to read a poem; that a portrait of an absent lover is gazed at longingly every day, while a sonnet provides at best cold comfort. And music, alas, cannot compete at all because of its evanescence; no sooner launched upon the air a cadence is already lost.

Such arguments may seem inconsequential today, but they were vital when their success involved the rank and status of the painter. The battle had largely been won by 1546, when Benedetto Varchi sent out his famous questionnaire. The wrangle over the respective merits of painting and sculpture had replaced the liberal status of the art of painting as a subject for a disputation now grown academic. But Leonardo was in deadly earnest in excluding from the liberal arts his competitor, the sculptor, who indicates distance and volume by brute mechanical displacement rather than by the subtle intellectual devices of the painter. Moreover the sculptor, poor devil, lives amidst dirt, din and confusion, covered with a gritty paste compounded of sweat and marble dust, while the painter can work like a gentleman, elegantly dressed, surrounded by music, sweet smells and polite conversation. The Renaissance painter's 20th century descendant did not

always avail himself of more respectable arguments in effecting his liberation from the tyranny of the academies.

When Leonardo embarks upon enthusiastic celebration of the omnipotence of his art he becomes a poet in his own right. "If the painter wishes to see beauties that charm him it lies in his power to create them, and if he wishes to see monstrosities that are frightful, buffoonish, or ridiculous, or pitiable, he can be lord and God (creator) thereof; and if he wishes to produce inhabited regions or deserts, or dark and shady (cool) retreats from the heat, or warm places for cold weather, he can do so. If he wants valleys (likewise) if he wants from high mountain tops to unfold a great plain extending down to the sea's horizon, he is lord to do so; . . . In fact whatever exists in the universe, in essence, in appearance, in the imagination, the painter has first in his mind and then in his hands; and these are of such excellence that they are able to present a proportioned and harmonious view of the whole that can be seen simultaneously, at one glance, just as things are in nature."

The beauties of the book are endless, its compass convenient; it should give the student a new insight into the adventurous aspect of Renaissance painting, in which every picture was a new exploration of a mysterious, enchanting and inexhaustible material world. It should also lure the student deeper into the study of Leonardo's voluminous writings, for whose monumental publication (now unfortunately out of print), we are indebted to Miss Richter's late father.

It may therefore seem pedantic to take exception to the method of translation. But I cannot help feeling that a source or a text should be rendered as scrupulously as possible, even at the expense of an agreeable English style. Miss Richter cuts up or recombines sentences and paragraphs, substitutes nouns for verbs, participles for adjectives, shifts the action



from subject to predicate. Since this happens several times in each column, the result is a paraphrase in which the meaning is generally intact but the spontaneity and frequent rudeness of Leonardo's diction is smoothed into an inappropriately elegant English. There are occasional mystifying translations; "iddea" is rendered as ideal on page 52, as Deity on page 29; "superfitie" is (quite properly) surface on page 30, but on page 24 it is given as plane, and on page 31 it becomes area. "Vetri," by the way, are not glazes but glass, and in 16th century Italian a "spiaggia" does not mean only the seashore but also a meadow.

Throughout the references are sketchy, usually omitting date and place of publication, confusing in the case of old books which have run through many editions. On page 25 the author, discussing the pyramid of sight, tells us that it was part of Alberti's theory and is sure that Leonardo, if he could not have seen *Della Pittura* must at least have been aware of its contents. This is an understatement. Alberti's perspective theory was, at least in this respect, common shop practice in middle and late Quattrocento Florence, and Leonardo must have been brought up on it. The perspective treatise of Piero Della Francesca, available in Signora Fasola's excellent edition, deserved but did not receive mention in this connection. Occasionally the reader misses, in Miss Richter's introduction, an indication of the respective stylistic movements exemplified by the numerous 16th, 17th and 18th century commentators she so aptly quotes. The Leonardo drawings are so poorly reproduced, overprinted on yellow, that they might better have been omitted in view of the accessibility of the Windsor series in the Clark catalogue.

Such relatively minor defects, however, do not detract from the usefulness of this generally excellent edition.

FREDERICK HARTY  
Washington University

MARY C. RATHBUN AND BARTLETT H.

HAYES, JR., *Layman's Guide to Modern Art*, 110 pp., 130 ill., New York: Oxford University Press, 1949. \$4.00.

MORRIS DAVIDSON, *An Approach to Modern Painting*, xii + 155 pp., 122 ill., New York: Coward-McCann, 1948. \$3.50.

These volumes, similar in scope and intention, form an instructive contrast. Both are addressed to the general reader who seeks an understanding of modern art; both are amply illustrated, and the visual material selected covers much the same ground. They even propound the same general thesis; that the formal structure of modern art must be regarded not as a radical break with the past but rather as an adaptation of traditional and long-established devices to the needs of the present-day world. Yet *An Approach to Modern Painting* is a sorry failure, while the *Layman's Guide* fulfills its purpose so brilliantly that it can be recommended without reserve, not only to the neophyte but to the experienced critic as well.

Miss Rathbun's and Mr. Hayes' book is based on an interpretive exhibition, *Seeing the Unseeable*, held at the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., early in 1947. Combining pictures and text on almost every page, the volume retains the character of an elaborately captioned exhibition, after the manner of the educational displays in placard form prepared by the Museum of Modern Art. The great virtue of this method, which has been fully exploited here, is twofold: it promotes the closest possible interdependence of word and image and demands, in fact, that every argument presented must be equally cogent on both the verbal and pictorial level. The choice and juxtaposition of the illustrations in the *Layman's Guide* is often provocative enough to convey the authors' ideas, so that the reader is constantly challenged to test his perceptions without resorting to the text.

The central problem around which the

book is built concerns the nature of reality. On the very first page, we are warned that reality, which includes both the tangible and the intangible, is not a constant but changes with every phase of man's development; that it has undergone a tremendous expansion in recent times, so that much of it remains unfamiliar to the layman, while the artist, more sensitive to the true qualities of modern life, has perforce been obliged to adopt new images in keeping with his new thoughts. The authors state that they will refrain from making any pronouncements on what is good or bad among the paintings to be discussed, "for that question is without meaning when asked of man's search for truth. Is nature itself good? Or bad? Who can tell?" After thus defining their own exploratory attitude, they proceed to deal with the meaning and purpose of abstraction, i.e., the various ways in which paintings may depart from the surface appearance of things, and the reasons for such departures. This leads to a comparison of visual techniques, old and new (color, line, shape, pattern, space, etc.), demonstrating that "artists of all periods have painted imaginatively and used abstract devices to interpret the spirit peculiar to their own culture." The third, and in many ways the most stimulating and original part of the book is devoted to the influence of the modern environment on the artist's imagination. The term "environment" here includes not only such physical features as the myriad products of mechanization that form part of our existence, but the conceptual world of science and the emotional impact of social and political events. As might be expected in this area of unsettled opinion, the reader may now and then find himself at variance with the authors on individual problems of interpretation. Apart from such disagreements in detail, however, the entire section impresses this reviewer as extraordinarily cohesive and well planned. It should form an admirable basis for class room discussion. From the point

of view of practical use, one regrets that the publishers have seen fit to omit a table of contents, and to leave the pages and illustrations unnumbered. These minor defects could easily be repaired in further printings, of which the *Layman's Guide* deserves as many as possible.

Morris Davidson's book deserves notice in these columns only because of the unexampled degree to which it exhibits the vices of conventional "popularization." Its arguments and terminology are drawn from familiar and respected sources, such as Roger Fry, but this material has been so ill digested, and there is such a want of clarity and discipline throughout, that the critical vocabulary of the pioneer interpreters of post-Impressionist painting becomes a confusing jargon which tends to irritate rather than to enlighten the reader. We are told from the outset that there are two kinds of painting, one "plastic" and "creative," the other "conventional," "sentimental," or merely "decorative." By the time the author has traced these opposites through the entire history of art into the present, the only possible conclusion is that the two sets of adjectives are meant to convey his approval or disapproval; they have no other relation to the visible qualities of the works in question. How, indeed, could anything else be expected of a critic who assures us that "every man may write his own history of art, as every man may make his own anthology of the world's poetry?" Even the disarming candor of this opening statement, however, does not quite prepare the reader for the peculiar course he is asked to follow. The "anthology" begins with Paleolithic cave paintings, which "curiously resemble the work of contemporary artists whose esthetic training has been Cubism." That they should be "plastic, rather than merely representational," strikes the author as an inexplicable mystery. Egyptian and Mesopotamian art, on the other hand, adhere "in every respect to the conventional," without

perception and imagination. The former is "cold . . . to the point of horrifying," while the latter served only "the interest of propaganda or authoritarian ritual," so that the only outlet for the artist's esthetic feeling was the decorative treatment of detail. "In the same way," the author adds, "the Nazi painters of nudes meticulously painted the lace fringes of slips and other undergarments."

His opinion of African Negro art is rather higher (he refers to the "plastic sculpture" of the Ivory Coast), even though he finds it subject to "Egyptian, Polynesian, and other Asiatic influences." And well he might, since he also mentions "the geometric forms of Negro sculpture of New Guinea (*sic*)" as a possible indication that the original home of the Negro had been Greece, Minoan, Mycenaean, and early Greek art is praised for its imaginative and abstract qualities, but the author is appalled at the "abrupt change in style . . . to large sculptures definitely Chinese in character," especially as this "absorption of Chinese influence . . . was a superficial stylization." As for the "technical, materialistic, sensation-loving Romans," they were, of course, "indoctrinated with the unimaginative, purely physical Greek ideal." Even Byzantine art, although "spiritual," is treated very briefly; it showed Christ as a "suffering poet" rather than as a pagan god. Its chronology is bewildering: it "was being put to the service of the Christian Roman Emperor Constantine," but then "the Mohammedans overran Constantinople and put the finishing touches to the Roman Empire," forcing Christian iconography to take refuge in Russia. "Not until centuries after the fall of Constantinople was the tradition revived in Europe. Two hundred years after Charlemagne . . . a church architecture came to exist in Italy requiring the services of image makers. The influx of Byzantine artists to supply the demand laid the beginnings of the . . . traditions of Italian painting." Thus the author is able to dispense with any mention of Medieval art; instead, he praises Persian

miniatures, which resemble "much modern art since Cubism."

After this dizzy gallop through the ages, one might expect a more steady pace in the remaining chapters, but no relief is forthcoming. "Giotto's rhythm," we read, "often resembles Mesopotamian rhythm . . . the volumes are solid, but the final result is flat design." Duccio, on the contrary, was "a space painter of a very high order," as was Sassetta, "who lived in the fourteenth century, perhaps two generations after Duccio." Piero della Francesca is the favorite of moderns because he is "Siennese: in his concept of space," while Leonardo (whose concept of space is defined as "Venetian"), Michelangelo, and Raffael are dismissed as having "little to offer to contemporary artists interested in painting as a pure art." Not so El Greco, who used "Venetian technique for spiritual ends" in Toledo, a town that was "more a replica of the cities of Asia Minor than of Western Europe," and where "the types were Semitic." Gruenewald, like El Greco, was a precursor of modern Expressionism, although influenced by "Michelangelo's romanticism" and "Titian's innovation of baroque shapes." Of the next two centuries we are told only in passing: "The courts of the Louis' nurtured a de luxe type of womanhood," and "Frans Hals's talent was phenomenal, but there is something vulgar and meretricious in his cleverness." The latter remark, strangely enough, is occasioned by the author's comments on van Gogh, whose "natural endowments were slight." He would have achieved little "had he not had guidance and teaching from the much more talented Gauguin." His "desperate effort to compel respect resulted in hysterical outpourings and finally suicide." We also learn that he "followed Courbet in his attitude to beauty." Yet Gauguin "occupies an important place . . . more through his influence upon van Gogh . . . than by virtue of his own works." Cézanne, in contrast was "the silent, unlettered, crude practitioner . . . who

proceeds to paint a profound cosmogony." His style was developed into "a system of calligraphic design" by Picasso and Braque "in one period of Cubism." Rouault's religious feeling "was a kind of biting cynicism that lashed out, in Van Gogh's puritanical fashion, against dance-hall types. . . . He caricatured humanity and used the rough technique to indicate his emotionalism." For Cubism before 1913 the author has nothing but praise; *collage*, however, "ushered in the end of Cubism as a serious art." Picasso's attempt, in *Guernica*, "at portraying horror in an abstract, epic composition" is pronounced "a heroic miscegenation," "a failure," because "the abstraction [is] too limited by the story element." The same artist's recent works "reveal a latent predisposition for Futurism."

But this is dangerous territory, except for those capable of deriving a kind of morbid pleasure from nonsense *per se*. In any event, Morris Davidson's approach to modern painting is obstructed by an almost unbelievable clutter of conceptual and perceptual debris. That a work of such monumental ineptitude should have been thought worthy of publication is a sad commentary indeed on the critical acumen of those responsible.

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MAX J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Landscape, Portrait, Still-Life: Their Origin and Development*, 288 pp., 41 ill., New York: Philosophical Library, n.d. \$6.00.

This most recent addition to the long series of important books written by Max J. Friedländer was first published in German as *Essays über die Landschafts malerei und andere Bildgattungen* (a fact not recorded in the present edition). Translated into English by R. F. C. Hull, it was brought out by Cassirer's at Oxford and now by the Philosophical Library in New York. The publishers have called it "a companion

piece, as it were, to *On Art and Connoisseurship*" (published at Cassirer's in 1942); more correctly, it might be called an elaboration upon five chapters out of this last book, namely those on Landscape, Genre, Portraiture, Religious Art, and Still-life.

Lecturers and audiences are well acquainted with the fact that it seems perfectly possible to speak on certain subjects satisfactorily either in one or in a dozen talks but not in two, three or four. I suspect that the main flaws of this, in many ways, admirable book are due to a similar predicament. Compared with the magnificent succinctness of the earlier treatment, the discussion is now fuller but not full enough to avoid the perils of semi-abbreviation. The more elaborate historical treatment has brought up controversial elements with regard to emphasis and distribution from which the lightning survey of the earlier work was exempt. This peril has been aggravated by a number of inconsistencies such as long intrusions of unrelated subjects into the main category under discussion (pp. 111, 127, 140-141); out of twelve pages which make up the chapter on "The Significance of Landscape in Our Day," eleven deal with the nineteenth century, and the chapter on "The Genre: Present and Future" has ten pages on the nineteenth century, one (very unsympathetic) page on the present and exactly two lines on the future. To this must be added irritations due to somebody's oversight such as the kneeling "painter" in the Rollin Madonna (p. 24), the misleading terms *east* and *west* for Northern and Southern Netherlands (pp. 40, 170, 252), the unwarranted use of German forms in an English translation (f.i., Löwen for Louvain or Leuven), the misprints "Rembrandt" instead of "Rubens" (twice on p. 103), seventeenth instead of eighteenth century (p. 213), "Barbiçon," Pollaiuolo, "Kansas, City Museum," and the misprinting of one, and mistranslation of the other Dutch quotation on p. 190. References to illustrations are withheld

from the reader until he has struggled through a description meant to be read while looking at the accompanying plate.

But yet—even the critical reader (and the reader of this book ought to be a critical reader, not a neophyte) will again find a seemingly inexhaustible amount of brilliant and sometimes entirely unsurpassable characterization of a term, a trend, a situation—the kind of gem he would expect from a past master in this field; and in most cases, he will be grateful to the translator for an excellent job. Here are some of them, chosen almost at random and with the invitation to look for more. "Form informs, color delights; form is the text, color the melody" (p. 124). "For the Impressionists a bit of land was the object; for the Old Masters it was made up of objects" (p. 129). "What music is in the categories of art, landscape is in the categories of painting" (p. 143). "The historical picture says: *that* happened once; the genre picture says: *this* happens often" (p. 155). "Taste is nothing but tact in the realm of aesthetics" (p. 196). "Nobody longs so avidly for the naïve as the sentimentalist" (p. 223). "The Middle Ages were not so mediaeval as we read in the books" (p. 234). "The profile is as it were the ground-plan of the physiognomical building and is to the front-view as map is to landscape" (p. 236). On p. 260 we read: "Understanding for Rembrandt is one of the spiritual achievements of the nineteenth century." We are indeed fortunate that in 1950 we can be reminded of that achievement by a man who was born midway between the publication of Eduard Kolloff's and of Eugène Fromentin's decisive contributions to it.

WOLFGANG STECHOW  
Oberlin College

ANDREW C. RITCHIE, editor, *Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture in the Permanent Collection*, 214 pp., 87 pl., Buffalo: Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, Albright Art Gallery, 1949. \$3.75.

ANDREW C. RITCHIE, editor, *Catalogue of Contemporary Paintings and Sculpture*, 214 pp., 80 pl., Buffalo: Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, Albright Art Gallery, 1949. \$3.75.

The teaching function of the American museum is nowhere better shown than in these companion volumes. They are first-rate evidence of the concept that the alert American museum of art is no mere repository of cultural masterpieces, to be revered by a receptive but uncritical public, but that it is an active force in presenting all kinds of art to the layman in such a way that it will best be understood. We are all acquainted with this approach in books about exhibitions of a temporary nature. But it would be difficult to find another catalogue of a permanent collection where the instructional and persuasive elements loom so large, or are so well achieved.

A sensible rule of thumb has been followed in separating the Gallery's collections into the two volumes. Included in the contemporary category are works of art of a non-traditional nature created in the twentieth century. Hence Maillol and Matisse appear with the more recent artists, whereas Glackens, Hassam, Bellows, and Augustus John keep company with the older masters.

"This catalogue is intended primarily for the layman, although data of interest to the scholar has not been excluded," states Ritchie. It can be used in two ways, he continues: "as a general introduction to the collection and as a memorandum for the visitor after he has seen the original works." The layman that the editor apparently had in mind is the interested, intelligent person of high-school education or better. The introduction to the volume on contemporary art, however, serves not only as a preparation for the explanatory paragraphs about the pictures and sculpture but also as a preview of several of the most important movements in art today. The author establishes a sympathetic bond of understanding with the struggling layman by repeating the popular sentiment



that these are troubled, complex times, and that the artist's task is indeed difficult "in a world dislocated almost beyond endurance." He then proceeds to give succinct explanations of five movements from which the paintings stem—Expressionism, Cubism, Abstraction, Surrealism, and Primitivism. The modification of each category by the phrase "and related paintings" disarms criticism and should help to prevent confusion. Borderline cases are placed with what appear to be near relatives of unquestioned classification.

The Expressionist category is used in the wide, flexible manner of Herbert Read. Candor and clear, simple English on the part of the author prevent the reader from concluding that classification is an end in itself. In Expressionism "the picture is consciously dissociated from nature as seen by the eye or the camera in order to illustrate or express the personality of the artist above all . . . the Expressionist is a fine example of private enterprise and rugged individualism." Cubism and Abstract art are briefly but clearly treated and a few, well chosen comments put Surrealism in its place. Two paragraphs sum up the difficulties of the sculptor today and also point out Ritchie's belief that the quality of sculpture, on the whole, appears to be higher than that of the total output of modern painting. Perhaps the amateur-in-the-gallery needs the exhortation at the end of the introduction, or perhaps it was included to please the directors. Ritchie concludes with a faintly enthusiastic inscription from the Gallery's Room of Contemporary Art which states in part that "the purpose of this Room is not to please one taste alone. The intention is to reflect the valid artistic currents of our own day in all their variety. If artists are experimental and adventurous, it is our duty, and often our pleasure, to study their new modes of expression."

Less determined to look at art from a sense of duty are the writers of the sensitive and excellent explanatory paragraphs which face the full-page illustrations.

Seldom do any of them bubble over with unjustified interpretation or hyperbolic praise. One feels that the writers have studied monographs and other pertinent material carefully. These introductions are also well written and varied, despite the fact that an author might feel justified in a catalogue in following the same pattern throughout. Observations by the artists of the abstract paintings do much to clarify the stand of this group. The comments may seem trite to the sophisticate or specialist, but they are grist to the amateur's mill. For instance, the carefully selected remarks by Matisse are entirely appropriate to his art; a quotation of 1865 about the virtues of croquet does much to make the reproduction of Homer's cool "Croquet Players" more engaging; Akhenaten's prayer and a poem by Marsden Hartley, though they have little to do with specific aesthetic features of the objects illustrated, have the far more important function of enhancing the observer's appreciation of the works of art in their totality.

These significant and usually restrained comments are, along with the excellent illustrations, the heart of the books. The photographs of the sculpture are particularly good, the angle of view interesting, lighting often subtle and without unjustifiable subordination of detail for dramatic effect. A good example is the picture of a bronze and marble seventeenth-century portrait of a princess of the Barbarini family. But perhaps the most outstanding feature of all, one which includes a few weak elements as well as many of unqualified success, is the physical arrangement and appearance of the materials included in both volumes.

In all but a very few instances a single illustration occupies the entire right-hand page, and is confronted by interpretive, biographical, and other data on the left-hand page. This system results in convenience and clarity, not without a hint of the splendor and unhurried presentation in catalogues of princely private collections of bygone days. In the volume

on contemporary art, titles are given under the picture, as well as on the page opposite, so that no one will have to guess which is the side, which the bottom, when it comes to the abstractions. The eye may feast itself upon the picture alone, undistracted by any labels, in the book containing the earlier work. Information given in this part of the catalogue includes the name of the artist, his nationality, and dates, all on the top line, followed at a respectful distance by the title of the picture or statue and the paragraph of explanation and appreciation. Then, inset and in italics, comes a terse sentence or so of biographical highlights in chronological order, and in the lower left corner of the page, in block form, information concerning the material or medium, date of the object, date and method of acquisition by the gallery, and name of donor or purchase fund. Of course, a few of the biographical facts sometimes turn up in the explanatory paragraph also, but the separation of the three classes of information and printing them in different type is highly commendable, the result of a desire of editor and publisher to make the book easy to use, whatever one's particular interest. Purely factual data occur again in the section at the end of each volume called "catalogue," which also serves as an index. The general impression the reader receives is a desire to see the originals, which he would expect to find perfectly installed in the gallery, well lighted and easy of inspection.

This effect is enhanced by the appearance of the books, which differ in some details but are both bound in blue-grey paper and have beautifully lettered title pages, tables of contents, and the like. Introductory matter and the lists at the end are printed on laid paper, which contrasts pleasantly in texture with the glazed stock on which the reproductions and their accompanying material are printed. It would appear that the volume on contemporary art was planned a little later than the other one, inasmuch as the separation of the paintings and

sculpture in the catalogue-index into two groups—those illustrated and those not illustrated—has wisely been done away with in this case. The index of the later (?) volume also lists the artists' names in simple alphabetical order, the only separation being between sculpture and painting. In this book a page with the title of the category precedes each stylistic group of paintings, a definite improvement over the other, where the six nationalities follow each other pell-mell and unannounced. In most of the classifications of the older work there are enough examples to have justified such a feature, and it would have been in accord with the generally sumptuous character of the catalogues. Since the lists at the end of this volume are obviously for reference, with their copious bibliographical material, greater simplicity in arrangement would have been preferable. But these are minor matters in view of the primary purpose of the books.

The Albright Gallery and all those connected with the publishing of this catalogue are to be congratulated on having produced what is on the whole a model of its type. The collection of paintings and sculpture, much of which is of high quality and some of it outstanding among its peers, is thus made available to layman and specialist alike in a very attractive and inexpensive publication. No one who is engaged in preparing a catalogue of a museum or exhibition can afford to overlook these two books.

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GOTTARDO SEGANTINI, *Giovanni Segantini*, 91 pp., 63 pl., Zürich: Rascher Verlag, 1949. 38 Swiss francs.

Giovanni Segantini's memory has been fittingly honored by the publication of this beautiful volume, written by his son Gottardo, on the fiftieth anniversary of his death. Magnificently illustrated, sixteen of the sixty-three plates are particularly successful in color, and there

are ninety-three text illustrations which give an adequate representation of his oeuvre. The Zürich publishing house, Rascher Verlag, seems to take a patriotic pride in doing justice to the merits of Swiss artists by works of suitably attractive format.

Segantini answers to the popular conception of an artist in his triumph by perseverance and sheer will power over adverse conditions and the contrariety of fate, and when a relatively easy success seemed assured, in thrusting it aside to follow his vision of light and color translated into a serious and enduring art.

Born in the Tyrol and brought to Milan as a small boy, much of Segantini's unhappy youth seems to have been spent running away from whatever was substituting for home at the time. Finally he managed to attend evening classes at the Brera and showed considerable talent in spite of his distaste for the academic approach. Soon he was working independently and in 1879 exhibited his first painting at the Brera, for which he obtained a medal. This was important because, in the fashion in which he rendered light streaming in a window by brilliant broken color, he foretold his later success with Divisionism. For a time, he did not follow this up but seemed more interested in realism. Several portraits apparently belong to this phase. But genre and still-life did not afford him an adequate outlet for the tremendous urge in him. There were no further discoveries in regard to color, but he experimented with dramatic contrasts of light and shade.

So once more, Segantini left Milan, to live in the High Alps among the Engadine peasants that he already knew well. Although it was their simple activities that he recorded, so that he has been compared to Millet, yet his real interest lay in rendering light and color, in the clear bright atmosphere of meadows high in the mountains. Perhaps his first real success, his painting "Ave Maria" was awarded a gold medal in the Amsterdam

exhibition in 1883. In this he emerges as a designer of uncommon force and originality, with serenity and spaciousness and a bent for unusual viewpoints. To gain the requisite effects of light, he again reverted to Divisionism, although even yet, he did not fully exploit its possibilities. Rather, he adopted short parallel strokes, with patches of flat color between. Soon the whole canvas was covered with jewel-like incrustations of pure colors which really blend in almost a vibration of light, all without sacrificing the definition of form.

Throughout his life, Segantini had a strong sense of the inherent poetry of the scene, and if his early canvases at times seem to stress sentiment, so his later tend to Symbolism, although his untimely death at forty-one left its possibilities unexplored. He had a special fondness for the dewy freshness of early morning and the clear level rays of the rising sun, usually in Spring when the Alpine meadows are ablaze with flowers, which lends a genuinely idyllic note to unassuming subjects. A master of spacious design, many of the landscapes, as Savonguino or Olona, are singularly attractive, but apart from his interest in technical problems, there is a strong infusion of Pantheism, a feeling of the unity of the spirit of men and animals with Nature, which lifts it above merely the recording of the charm of the sensuous world. Following his vision like a knight his quest, isolated among the mountains he loved to paint, Segantini discovered the theory and technique of Divisionism at the same time and independently of his French confrères, and embodied his ideas in works of enduring worth.

WALTER W. S. COOK  
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BENNO REIFENBERG AND WILHELM  
HAUSENTEIN, *Max Beckmann*, 34 pp.,  
86 pl. (3 in color), München: R.  
Piper & Co., 1949.

The most recent addition to the growing bibliography on Max Beckmann and

Expressionist painting in general has a good deal to recommend it, for those who wish to get a broader perspective on this painter's work. Some of the material contained herein is already familiar to American students: the "Letters to a Woman Painter" published in the COLLEGE ART JOURNAL, Autumn 1949, and "My Theory of Painting" published by the Buchholz Gallery in 1941 as *On My Painting*.

The introductory essay by Benno Reifenberg traces the development of the painter from his Impressionist beginnings to the present day, although as a stylistic analysis it leaves something to be desired. By comparison with the able introduction to the 1948 Beckmann catalogue prepared by Perry Rathbone of the City Art Museum in St. Louis, the present book offers far less developmental material and critical analysis of typical works.

It does, however, add one important biographical circumstance, the contact between Beckmann and Edvard Munch on the occasion of the younger artist's first success in Berlin, the *Young Men by the Sea* (1905) which was bought by the Weimar Museum and which won for Beckmann the Florence Prize. Munch, it seems, advised Beckmann against this half-realistic, half-idealistic (in the Marées sense) type of work. He recommended the direction indicated by Beckmann's other picture of that year, the *Great Death Scene* which the exhibition jury had refused and which remained a solitary effort along those lines for a long time. Yet the universality and powerful symbolism of Beckmann may be said to have begun at this point, while the influence of Munch, although inoperative at that time, came up again during the war and postwar periods.

After this first success Beckmann became one of the hopes of the Secession, assuming a leading position in 1910 from which he retired the following year to pursue his own path. He was still not part of the Expressionist movement;

his impressionist-naturalistic *The Street* (1913) was contemporaneous with the dissolution of *Die Brücke*. It was only during the course of his war experiences that his point of view was to change.

In the war period Mr. Reifenberg tells of a fresco to decorate the walls of a bath house, done by corpsman Beckmann at the orders of the commanding surgeon. Although this mural no longer exists, it was one of the first of Beckmann's essays in monumental painting.

Reifenberg carries on the creative story year by year with direct references to the plates in the book, but there is no real sense of moving from one period to another except perhaps geographically. Nor does the author explain the space conception behind many of Beckmann's pictures, as is so well done in the St. Louis exhibition catalogue by Mr. Rathbone.

Hausenstein's essay, "The Artist in Our Time" (*Der Maler in dieser Zeit*), which follows, is much more general in character. Mr. Hausenstein was one of the four contributors to the early Beckmann monograph of 1924 also published by Piper in Munich. He follows the discursive lines of his earlier essay and writes with skill and charm, although he does not add materially to our store of knowledge.

From the point of view of the student the great merit of the present volume lies in its beautifully printed illustrative material and its catalogue. The full page plates and the text illustrations give us for the most part pictures not to be found in the St. Louis catalogue, and especially noteworthy in the new graphic examples. In the five color plates this book has something really fine; with the exception of the early *Before the Ball* (1922) they are works done from 1941 to 1943, achieving a more faithful reproduction because they avoid the very large paintings of this period. Certainly this is a welcome change from the recent Beckmann color portfolio produced in Germany, and will be particularly useful

to anyone who has not had the opportunity of seeing the Beckmann circulating exhibition.

The catalogue appendix lists 660 works from public and private collections (exclusive of graphic works) in Germany, Holland, the United States, Switzerland, and Great Britain. For those interested in Beckmann's work this should prove an indispensable tool. Looking through this latest listing of the works of Beckmann, we realize again how many modern paintings have disappeared, at least for the time being. There is reason to believe that a certain number of the pictures catalogued here with their present whereabouts unknown will soon emerge from the Central Collecting Point at Wiesbaden where a good deal of modern material is being gathered for return to its rightful owners.

BERNARD MYERS  
New York

R. H. WILENSKI, *Outline of English Painting*, 133 pp., 33 ill. (1 in color), New York: Philosophical Library, 1948. \$3.75.

ROBIN IRONSIDE AND JOHN GERE, *Pre-Raphaelite Painters*, 49 pp., 110 ill. (4 in color), New York: Phaidon Publishers, distributed by Oxford University Press, 1948. \$7.50.

SAMUEL AND RICHARD REDGRAVE, *A Century of British Painters*, ed. Ruthven Todd, 485 pp., 100 ill., London: Phaidon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1947. \$2.50.

Two of these books are worthy of serious consideration. The third, Wilenski's *Outline*, barely warrants notice. It is a superficial condensation of the author's older book, *English Painting*, and while it might have some economic justification if sold as a paper-back at twenty-five cents, it has none at three dollars and seventy-five.

The two Phaidon publications are well produced books as to typography and illustrations. The *Pre-Raphaelite Painters*

is a catalogue of the major pictures of the school with excellent notes by John Gere. The introduction by Robin Ironside is so turgid in style it is almost unreadable. Here is a sample sentence: "This tension of mind and spirit distinguished from other similar endeavors the Pre-Raphaelite determination to envisage the world sharply and clearly, to be delivered, rather late in the day as it may now appear, from the grumous tonal harmonies and trite rotundities of form that denaturalized the art of the 'history' painters quite as much as that of the popular, omnipresent purveyors of facetious genre, and even disfigured with a bedimmed effect of complacent conformity, almost of punctilio, the works of painters so delightful as Stothard, Wilkie, Collins or Webster." Undoubtedly Mr. Ironside in this and other sentences is attempting to say something very profound about the Pre-Raphaelite school, but after three readings I am still in the dark as to his general thesis or how he arrives at the conclusion "that English romantic painting will be recurrently compelled, if not predisposed, to reckon with the rare, narrow summits to which Pre-Raphaelitism was laboriously lifted in the virgin agitation of its spirits." I repeat, however, the catalogue notes are full of valuable information and, together with the plates, are well worth any reader's time and study.

The Messrs. Redgrave's *A Century of British Painters* was first published in 1866 and reissued in 1890. Mr. Todd's book is based on the later edition. His job of editing consists of silent corrections of fact, noting the present location of many of the pictures under discussion, an extensive bibliography, the addition of one hundred well-chosen plates and a weakly defended deletion of the authors' chapter on the Pre-Raphaelites. The latter, however "ill-balanced" the editor may consider it, is surely of historical interest, at least, since it is a contemporary appraisal. Aside from this one defect, this reprint of the first "popular"



history of British Painting was well worth doing and the publishers have succeeded in producing a most attractive book in every respect.

The Redgraves, on the other hand, succeeded in producing a most readable and, to our cynical modern taste, a very just account of the history of British painting up to their own time. Richard Redgrave was a Royal Academician and given our present prejudices against that institution we might expect a member to be somewhat narrow if not warped in his judgments. On the contrary, the Redgraves lean over backwards to be fair and even on occasion take issue with traditional or fashionable estimates of well known figures in the British School. Hogarth is not only praised, as you might expect from Victorians, for his moral teaching; his strength and weaknesses as a painter are perceptively discussed. Reynolds, however highly praised for his learning and inventiveness as a portrait painter, is taken severely to task for his technical deficiencies, particularly his wanton use of fugitive colors and faulty vehicles. Gainsborough is praised for the permanence and clarity of his colors and the poetic fluency of his draughtmanship, while Lawrence is heavily criticized for the superficial prettiness of much of his work. Blake, however much the Redgraves follow the popular 19th century prejudice that he was perhaps unbalanced if not mad, is nevertheless appreciated as a unique genius.

As a sourcebook of information on British painters of the first half of the 19th century this history will always remain invaluable. The authors were contemporaries of many of the painters and got many of their facts at first hand. Where this was not possible, they industriously searched the records available to them. Their book is not the most orderly in plan. They casually interrupt their account of water color painting after chapter XII and take it up again in chapter XV, and they think nothing of

running off at a tangent for pages on end. But the leisurely style of the book fits the loose organization of the material and perhaps the very casualness and unpretentiousness of the presentation is a factor in keeping the reader's interest.

The Redgraves' class-conscious accounts of artists' lives is also of interest to the modern reader, who has long since outgrown such prejudice. The discreetly snobbish handling of Lawrence's antecedents is an example: "His father was the son of a clergyman, and although originally bred to the law, was at the time of his son's birth the landlord of the White Lion Inn in that city; his mother was a daughter of the vicar of Tenbury. The marriage of the parents of the painter had been somewhat clandestine, and Mrs. Lawrence was disowned by her family on that account; she seems to have been a woman of much refinement and sweetness of disposition, and was hardly fitted for the hostess of an inn."

Above all, the lively use of gossip and anecdote to lighten otherwise serious exposition should help to ensure the continued life of *A Century of British Painters*. The best anecdote in the book, I think, is told about Hoppner, who, perhaps due to ill-health, was of an irritable temperament: "A wealthy stock-broker drove up to his door, whose carriages emptied into his hall, in Charles Street, a gentleman and lady, with five sons and seven daughters, all samples of *Pa and Ma*—as well fed and as city bred a comely family as any within the sound of Bow bells. 'Well, Mr. Painter,' said he, 'here we are, a baker's dozen; how much will you demand for painting the whole lot of us; prompt payment for discount?' 'Why,' replied the astonished painter, viewing the questioner, who might be likened to a superannuated elephant, 'why, that will depend upon the dimensions, style, composition, and . . . ' 'Oh, that is all settled,' quoth the enlightened broker; 'we are all to be

touched off in one piece as large as life, all seated upon our lawn at Clapham, and all singing *God Save the King.*"

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MAX BURCHARTZ, *Gleichnis der Harmonie: Gesetz und Gestaltung der bildenden Künste*, 214 pp., 50 pl. (7 in color), München: Prestel Verlag, 1949. 32 d.m.

The period of the manifestoes of the avant-garde has passed with the twenties, when they were all too numerous. Modern art has since gone far beyond these often unintelligible fanfares and has—primarily through its application to functional objects—penetrated the life, if not always the consciousness, of modern society.

There is no longer a need to be apologetic or persuasive about modern art. It has become a living reality which must be seen as an organic part of total development. What has been lacking is an integration of modern art with the totality of all visual creation. The author has aimed at a standard of values, valid for work in all material: stone and clay, wood, metal, textile and plastics, paper, canvas and paint, and for all epochs of history and pre-history—an astonishing undertaking.

Burchartz sees the end of art in what he calls harmony. This is found in nature but can also be created by man, by the artist, when it becomes an activating force aiding man to find his place in the harmonious unity of the world. Here Burchartz shows affinity with Conrad Fiedler, who in the second half of the 19th century saw in art the force enabling man to gain understanding and clarity from the confused images in nature.

Fiedler by separating the plastic arts from general esthetics established the theory of pure vision and laid the groundwork for a formal approach to problems of art. Wölfflin, to whom

Burchartz acknowledges his debt, established a definite and workable set of principles for the development of style, and Burchartz, within this line of continuity, builds his work on basic standards of sense perception. His aim is to show that the same forces and laws of order are the basis of all creative activity, while the combination of these forces and the change in emphasis cause changes in style.

Burchartz establishes nine basic elements of sense perception, four of which are properties of light—brightness, hue, saturation, definition of contour—and five are properties of space—size, direction, volume, composition on the plane, composition in depth.

Each of these principles consists of polarities of plus and minus, or active and passive. We know that light colors have greater visual attraction, appear larger, advance towards the spectator, have a more stimulating effect as against dark colors, which retreat from the eye, appear smaller and have a more quieting effect. These plus and minus, active and passive (unfortunately, Burchartz also chooses to refer to them as masculine and feminine) polarities are demonstrated for all the basic principles of sense perception. He contrasts such polarities as warm color against cool, mass against void, and continues for all the nine basic elements.

Goethe, as Burchartz points out, has arrived at a similar set of polarities in his *Farbenlehre*, but whereas Goethe limited himself to color polarities, Burchartz sets out to show these polarities for all visual perception.

Having presented his basic principles, his visual alphabet, Burchartz proceeds in the second part of the book to analyze their combinations into "order in space and order in time," with the aid of well-chosen examples from the history of world art. His treatment of real and illusionary space is one of his major contributions. Real space is the interior and exterior space of architecture; it is

the architectural element of sculpture (here Burchartz' treatment unfortunately merely reiterates Adolf von Hildebrand's concept of relief sculpture); it is painting within the plane: that painting (primitive, medieval, modern) more concerned with the two-dimensional aspects of the picture space than with creating the illusion of the third dimension.

But while Burchartz himself derives from the Bauhaus and from Neo-Plasticism, he explains succinctly the historical development of illusionary space in art from Giotto to Seurat. Although he establishes basic principles, he realizes the importance of different standards of values for different epochs. He displays, for instance, great understanding for the art of the baroque when vibrating rhythm and the total pictorial effect were more essential than such concepts as structural honesty. Rhythm itself is the "order in time." It is the least intellectual, the most emotional element giving life and vitality to art.

In the third part of the book, the author deals with tensions between basic principles of light and space, with the tensions between visual form and functional purpose, material and visual concept, real and illusionary space in painting, between the three dimensions of space and the fourth dimension of time. He analyzes different solutions of these tensions into an order of harmony. He gives the reader the possibility of definite value judgements of past and present art on the basis of his premises. He points out contemporary solutions of the basic tensions in the fields of architecture, typography and painting.

He calls the last chapter of the book "Equivalence of Harmony," as the book itself. Here the writer makes his final point: It is not decisive whether the artist works intellectually or gives free

reign to his imagination, whether a work of art aims to imitate nature, to fulfill a utilitarian function, or to create beauty. The value of a work of art is determined solely by the ability of the artist to express the polar tensions of his work and bring them into harmonious unity. This is the non-changing factor, the absolute end of art. Beyond that each artist has his own style, determined by an innumerable array of circumstances of time, country, personality.

Burchartz himself began his career as a painter and worked in Paris in the early days of Cubism. In the early twenties he was in Weimar close to the masters of the Bauhaus and to Theo van Doesburg. Until 1933 he combined theoretical work at the famous Folkwangschule in Essen with practical work in typography and industrial design. He is now back teaching at the Folkwangschule.

Burchartz designed the typography. He paragraphs in a rather unusual manner, which is very handsome and may have theoretical advantages but impairs the flow of reading. The fifty excellent plates—some of them in color—drawings, diagrams, and tables in the text, all aid to make this a significant text for the artist, art-educator, esthetician, and lay-man who wants to gain a rational approach to the problems of modern art and the meaning of all visual creation.

Although this is by no means the "general dispensation" for the plastic arts that Goethe desired, and although no final rules for art have been established here, it is a basic text of principles of harmony for the visual arts. It is hoped that an English translation will be forthcoming.

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PAUL KLEE, "THE ROAD FROM UNKLACH TO CHINA"  
*Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York*

